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SHORT DISCOURSES
FOR
ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR

ACCORDING TO THE MIND AND METHOD
OF THE CATECHISM OF THE
COUNCIL OF TRENT

BY



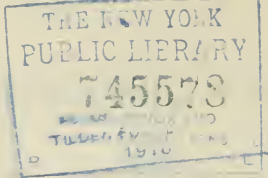
REV. JOHN McQUIRK, D.D., LL.D.,

RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,
NEW YORK CITY.

"I would not have you be moved because that frequently your discourse has appeared to you to be mean and wearisome. For it is possible, that it may not have appeared so to him whom you were instructing, but that because you felt desirous that something better should be heard, therefore, what you were saying appeared to you unworthy the ears of others. For I, too, am almost always displeased with my own discourse."—St. Aug. De Cat. Rud.

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JOHN M. FARLEY, D.D.
Archbishop of New York

NEW YORK, March 19th, 1908.

PREFACE

The Course of Instructions contained in this Volume is based upon, or extracted from, the Catechism of the Holy Council of Trent, sometimes called the Roman Catechism.—A Work written by the authority of the same August Assembly, and sanctioned by Pius V, and many of his successors; and meant to be the guide of bishops, priests, and all invested with the Pastoral office, and the store-house whence they are to draw the material for instructing in their Religion the Christian people committed to their care.

These Instructions follow the method and mind and spirit of that memorable Work; they are its close and faithful reproduction in a form suitable to be spoken and adapted to the average capacity of those attending Divine service. The form and expression belong to the Author; the substance belongs to the Catechism. The merit of these Instructions, therefore, must be considerable, as there is so little of the Author, and so much of the Catechism—the production of the greatest minds of the Queen of Councils, and which stands alone among all kindred works in ancient or modern times; whose superiority and supremacy is acknowledged even by those who do not employ it, but follow other approved treatises of similar scope. While thus

universally celebrated, it is to be regretted that it is not so universally used.

The origin and history of the Catechism is familiar to every ecclesiastic. The name of St. Charles Borromeo can never be separated from its inception, progress and completion. The Council of Trent, anxious to apply remedies to the evils of that period, and to the same evils of all future times, was not content with condemning errors and teaching truths, but sought also to appoint a certain way and rule of instructing the Faithful in the Faith. The Holy Council had this in view from the first; and in its XVIII Session decreed that a book suitable for this purpose should be composed. St. Charles Borromeo, who had conceived the idea, was largely instrumental in bringing this about.

As the Council adjourned before the work was finished, it commanded those charged with the task, that the Catechism when completed should be submitted to the Pope that it might be approved and published by His Authority. They labored at it for two years during the Council; on its dissolution they assembled for three years in Rome to prosecute the work. Its different parts were assigned severally to the most distinguished theologians. Before its approval by Pius V, it was subjected to the scrutiny of the most learned scholars and profound theologians appointed by the Pope. He approved it, not once, but many times, and commanded its use by all employed in the preaching of the Word or the instruction of the Faithful. It was also approved by Gregory XIII; St. Charles, in many Synods sanctioned it with his great authority and

enforced its use. Since then it has been extolled by innumerable Councils and authorities.

I subjoin the decree of the Council, Session XXIV, Chapter VII, bearing upon the writing of the Catechism. "In order that the Faithful people may approach to the reception of the Sacraments with greater reverence and devotion of mind, the Holy Synod enjoins on all bishops, that not only when they are themselves about to administer them to the people, they shall first explain, in a manner suited to the capacity of those who receive them, the efficacy and use of those Sacraments, but shall endeavor that the same be done piously and prudently by every parish priest; and this even in the vernacular tongue, if need be, and it can be conveniently done; and in accordance with the form which will be prescribed for each of the Sacraments, by the Holy Synod, in a Catechism which the bishops shall take care to have faithfully translated into the vulgar tongue, and to have expounded to the people by all parish priests; as also that, during the solemnization of Mass, or the celebration of the divine offices, they explain, in the said vulgar tongue, on all festivals, or solemnities, the Sacred oracles, and the maxims of Salvation; and that, setting aside all unprofitable questions, they endeavor to impress them on the hearts of all, and to instruct them in the law of the Lord."

The approvals and praises of the Book have been unceasing from its first publication to the present time. Its accuracy, while not necessarily unerring, is unquestioned. In Roman schools it is placed side by side with the Summa of St. Thomas. That

Luminary of Dominican theologians, worthy to be mentioned with the Angel of the Schools, Natalis Alexander, wrote his immortal Dogmatic and Moral Theology upon the very text of the Catechism: following its order, its sections, its questions, its paragraphs. "Nor could he, deliberating long and anxiously for some labor in which to employ" his unequalled talents and inexhaustible erudition "for the glory of God, find anything more useful or conducive to the 'Work of the ministry and the edification of the body of Christ'" than to expound and develop the Majestic Compendium which Trent has bequeathed to all ages.

This Treatise of Theology thus authentic, drawn from the purest sources, constitutes an unfailing fount whence may be drawn matter, abundant and fruitful, for sermons more than sufficient for the longest life. How much better to drink from this than from homiletic monthlies, and all that kind of compilations, good, bad and indifferent, and all unsuited to the individual ingenium or mind; while in this Catechism the matter alone is given, the form results from the assimilation of this matter to the individual capacity or genius; the only true way of using anything not absolutely the fruit of one's own thought. "*Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur*"; and, we may add, the style natural to the writer or speaker. I would say, away with ready-made sermons; find the matter in this Catechism and compose your own sermons. Nor does this militate at all against the writing of such a Book as the present: for in the use of this Book half the labor of consulting the Catechism itself is over-

come: and you will so find the matter as to be easily digested and assimilated to your own mind.

Hoping that the Instructions may be of service to his fellow-workers in the ministry of the Word, either by lightening their labors, or rendering their discourses more complete and effective, the Author commends himself to their prayers.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEW YORK.

Festival of Sts. Peter and Paul, 1908.

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THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE GLORY OF THE JUST ON THE LAST DAY.

“And then they will see the Son of man coming on a cloud, with great power and majesty.”—St. Luke xxi; 27.

A DAY shall come at the end of time when Jesus Christ will judge the world. On that day, in the same place, all men, living and dead, the damned and the saved, in the hearing of an assembled world, before that august tribunal, will know their eternal doom. Of course it will be but a renewal of the sentence pronounced upon them at the hour of death.

The prophet Daniel foresaw this great event: “I beheld therefore in the vision of the night, and lo, one like a son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and He came even to the Ancient of days: and they presented Him before Him. And He gave Him power, and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and tongues, shall serve Him: His power is an everlasting power, that shall not be taken away; and His kingdom shall not be destroyed. . . . My spirit trembled: I, Daniel, was affrighted at these things, and the visions of my head troubled me. . . . But the saints of the Most High God shall take the kingdom: and they shall possess the kingdom forever and ever” (Daniel vii; 13, 14, 15, 18).

The announcement of the sentence of eternal woe or bliss will not be the least part of the shame of the wicked and the glory of the just.

To the just the Redeemer will say, with a countenance radiant with joy: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

On that great day when our hearts shall be turned inside out, and their secrets unfolded, what a noble spectacle the heart of the just man and his good deeds will present to an admiring and applauding world! Then will be seen his faith in God that formed the very soul of his life and character, the hope that consoled and sustained him in spite of the obstacles and scorn of men, his burning charity for men in whom he worshipped the image of his God. Then will he be crowned with glory for the sacrifices and heroic labors undertaken for God and his neighbor, and the deeds of benevolence which his right hand did and the left never knew. Then will he shine as a star in the firmament, for those whom he had instructed and edified unto righteousness and salvation. Then will come to light the elevation of soul and loftiness of motive which raised him above the concerns of this life, to a plane far higher than that of the rest of men, where he breathed a diviner atmosphere, and which guided his whole conduct. Then will be seen the difference between the standard upon which the saints lived, and the standard pursued by the votaries of this world; who forever remain below the level, and strangers to the holiness and sublimity of motive, which belongs to the children of God.

The just man, during the days of life, feels the consolation and bliss that his conscience affords him. It is his support and stay in all his trials: amidst the desertion of friends, the assaults of temptation, temporal losses and sacrifices for duty's sake. How great its consolation in that day which will be the termination of all his trials, the recompense of his fidelity to God, the realization of his hopes, the beginning of his glory!—on that day when he will be approved by God and applauded by men. How little will then appear to him the trials and sufferings of this life compared with the eternal weight of glory which he is about to enjoy! A thousand lives would not be enough for such an exchange. How profoundly grateful will he be to God for the graces received during time; that he lived for the end for which he had been made; that God's law was ever uppermost in his mind; that he sought the kingdom of God and His justice; that he sacrificed time to eternity. The remembrance of sins committed will be assuaged by the remembrance of his repentance.

The tribute which is virtue's due is not always rendered to it in this world. On that day it will be rendered by all men. In the light of the judgment day men will give testimony to the truth, and acknowledge that, short of God, there is nothing more truly noble and more deserving of glory than the true servant of God, whose life is the reflex of his faith. Here below the worldly wise and the votaries of the fashions of this world despise or affect to despise the actions and religious practices of the God-fearing and God-loving. They look upon their piety with contemptuous pity, their sense of religion

as superstition, their faith, if not feigned, as credulity; conscience they scout as a delusion, their purity as incredible, the future life as a chimera, a Providence who will one day reward virtue and punish vice as an idle phantasy; meekness, patience, humility, detachment from the world as pusillanimity and meanness of spirit. The world will on that day acknowledge its error. It will then acknowledge that the saints alone were wise; that except the virtuous and God-fearing, all have lived in vain; that virtue and religion were the only subjects worth laboring for during the time of life; they will exclaim in bitterness of disappointment, "Behold those whom we held in scorn, their life without purpose and their end without honor, behold them among the children of God and heirs of everlasting glory." The glory of the world's greatest heroes, and the exclusive objects of its admiration, and who alone were reputed great, will pale before that of the humble servant of God who passed his days in obscurity, unknown of men, content with the knowledge and service of God.

The glory of the just on that day cannot be imagined to the full unless viewed in the light and contrast of the shame and disgrace and confusion that shall cover the reprobate when their eternal doom is declared in the withering words of God's malediction: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." What added consolation shall be that of the just when they realize that they have escaped God's wrath and eternal woe; and, instead, are united with Him in bliss and love forever.

This, certainly, should console the just during the trials and tribulations of this life, and powerfully animate them in their conflict with the flesh, the world and the devil, and so strengthen them at all times as to make successful issue with sin.

Thus will the just receive glory even from men; thus will virtue obtain the esteem which iniquity so often usurps; thus will God's providence, which so often allows the just to be overwhelmed with shame and suffering, while the wicked are laden with honors and revel in pleasure, be justified; thus shall all things subserve the glory of the elect and virtue overcome the world.

This day which will come at the end of the world virtually comes to every one at the hour of his death. For the sentence then decreed shall never be reversed; as we fall, so shall we remain. Our eternal doom is decided when the soul leaves the body.

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

“Art Thou He who should come, or must we look for another?”—St. Matt. xi; 3.

SO LIMITED is the human mind that although by laborious inquiry it has learned some divine truths, yet by its own light it could never know most of the truths necessary for eternal salvation. Hence the need of divine revelation, and its acceptance by the mind, which is faith.

As faith comes by hearing, the necessity of a divinely established ministry to teach, and to be heard, is apparent. In a manner adapted to times and circumstances this light and guidance has been vouchsafed by God, Who has never been wanting to the children of men. If men are carried about by every wind of doctrine, they owe it to themselves by refusing to submit to the Apostles and their successors whom He has sent to teach the world, and of whom He says: “He that hears you, hears Me; and he that despises you, despises Me.” And with them in their teaching office, He promises to “abide all days, even to the end of the world”; thereby investing them with His personal authority and continual presence.

This feeding of the souls of men with the word of truth and life, always necessary and never to be

interrupted, has become even more imperious in its nature in these latter days; for "false prophets have gone forth into the world, with various and strange doctrines"; unsent by the Lord, and of whom He had already said: "I sent them not, and they ran; I spoke not to them, yet they prophesied." Not only by personal address and preaching when it is possible, but by more insidious and therefore more dangerous means, and especially by unceasing and unlimited publications, poisoned doctrines and fatal errors and rank impiety and shameless obscenity are spread broadcast in society, and presented even to the minds of the young and thoughtless and unsuspecting. Even under the semblance of piety and wearing the garb of religion, traps are laid for undermining faith, and crushing the fair fruits of virtue and piety.

All this shows the duty that lies upon every one of being thoroughly grounded in his faith; and the insufficiency for the dangers referred to, and even for the soul itself, of being satisfied with the mere readiness to believe whatever the Church teaches. Not that every one must be a theologian in his exact and exhaustive knowledge of Christian doctrine, but that he may be able to give an account of his faith, and to defend it when occasion presents; and, above all, that he may be able to receive the sacraments with fruit, and discharge faithfully all his other religious duties. For these purposes the short discourses prescribed by the Council of Baltimore to be given at all early Masses are admirably suited; yet not to the extent of relieving those who hear them from attending frequently at the longer

and more formal sermons usually preached at the High Mass and in the evening. The diligent reading of the larger *catechisms* also conduces most fully to this same purpose.

The very essence of all religious knowledge, and what should be the steady aim of the preacher to teach and of the faithful to learn, is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent; for this is true life. "To know Jesus Christ and Him crucified," is no less necessary unto salvation for every man than it was for the Apostle; for "there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby they can be saved;" "for He is the propitiation for our sins."

All salutary knowledge of Jesus Christ must lead us to keep His Commandments: unless we do this, in vain is our knowledge of Himself or of His law. Hence our lives are to be conformed to His: not passed in indolence nor lost in dissipation and iniquity. We are to follow Him Who not only redeemed us, but gave us an example in which we are to "pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness:" for, "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works."

As the love of God, and the fulfillment of His law, and works of faith and of hope and of every Christian virtue are the purpose of religion, all religious instruction must aim at these objects; and move men to love God's infinite goodness, and inflame them with a divine ardor by which they may be drawn to the supreme and perfect good, in Whom alone

can be found true and solid happiness. This the Apostle does when he refers all his teachings to charity "which never fails." Christian knowledge, delivering to us the maxims of a heavenly life, should show its fruit in our altered conduct and improved character: our life here should be a fit prelude to our life hereafter.

While "all Scripture, divinely inspired, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work," yet it will be found that all that is most essential, and which it concerns us most to learn, is contained in the Apostle's Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer—the four heads to which may be reduced the whole sum or cycle of Christian doctrine; which includes almost everything to be known by a Christian. With these every Christian should study to familiarize himself more and more, not merely to comprehend them, but that they may sink into his heart, so that he may practice what he professes.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

DISPOSITIONS FOR BAPTISM.

“ And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou art not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? ”—St. John i; 25.

“ Unless a man be born again of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”—St. John iii; 5.

THE necessity of Baptism to all men is prescribed in these words of our Lord. Unless born again to God by the grace of this Sacrament, they are begotten of their parents, faithful or infidel, to eternal misery and destruction. In view of this imperative need thus emphatically laid down by the Lord, it is sad beyond measure to reflect that so many are living without having received this salutary and all-necessary grace. It is calculated that more than nine-tenths of those whom we meet are unbaptized. Christ's discourse with Nicodemus discloses the awful fact that all these are not on the road of salvation; have not entered by the necessary portal to the grace and salvation which He has purchased for them by His blood and death; that they are yet in their sins, original and actual; and refuse the ransom and grace gratuitously offered them.

Although the words of Christ addressed to the Apostles, “ to teach and baptize,” and “ he that be-

lieves and is baptized shall be saved," implying that teaching and believing should precede Baptism, would seem at first to restrict this Sacrament to those arrived at reason, yet the Church has received from Apostolic tradition that children and infants are no less to be baptized; and that the words of Christ prescribing the necessary conditions for adult Baptism are not to be applied to them. Nor can it in any way be accounted a hardship or an injury, that the means of salvation so absolutely necessary and which the child would insist upon receiving, if capable of knowing that without it he would be eternally lost, inasmuch as every one must will his eternal salvation, and what is before God necessary thereto is conferred when the child is not capable by express act of indicating its consent. No one can say that it is unjust to screen the child from danger, or, to administer medicine to cure or ward off diseases, or to hinder it from playing with dangerous instruments, or to confer upon it any signal benefit.

Nor can we think that Christ would deny this wholesome and all-necessary means of salvation to those of whom He said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"; whom He embraced, upon whom He laid His hands, whom He blessed. If the kingdom of heaven is of such, it is obvious that they must be baptized. St. Paul baptized a whole family: the word "whole" sufficiently implies that it was not childless. If circumcision, the figure of Baptism, could profit children, why should not Baptism, the thing signified, and which is the

circumcision of Christ not made with hands? As children from their birth inherit original sin, and yet have no personal participation in it, why should they not obtain grace and justice long before they can of themselves seek it? "If by the one man's sin death reigned through the one: much more they who receive the abundance of the grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life through the one Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one to all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of one, to all men to justification of life." Since, therefore, by the sin of Adam, children from their very birth contract guilt, much more by Christ Our Lord can they obtain grace and justice to reign in life; which truly without Baptism by no means can be done.

From the necessity of Baptism to salvation even for infants, and from the continual danger of death, because of their weakness and tenderness, to which they are especially liable, we can understand the great guilt which parents and others who are interested incur who allow them to remain destitute of the grace of the Sacrament longer than necessity absolutely requires. The faithful parents will not allow more than a week to pass without securing this Sacrament for the new-born child; the careless parents will learn that it were a mortal sin to defer it for a month.

Very different is the preparation needed for those who at years of reason receive this Sacrament, and those who receive it in infancy. The latter, being incapable of interior dispositions, do not require them. They are baptized in the faith of their

parents, if these are of the faith; if not, they are provided with the faith of the whole multitude of the saints, by whose charity they are joined into the communion of the Holy Ghost. Adults are advised and persuaded with all earnestness, yet left free, to receive Baptism. They are taught that Baptism necessitates a perfect conversion to God; they are reminded of the danger of delaying this conversion and Baptism; and that the longer they delay Baptism, the longer they are destitute of the grace and power of the other Sacraments, to which it is the necessary entrance. Besides, delay deprives them of the forgiveness of sin, every spot and blemish of which is washed away by this Sacrament, which also adorns the soul with grace by which sin can be avoided and justice and innocence secured.

Yet the Church has always forbidden undue haste, and commanded salutary delay, to test the dispositions of those who in the use of reason and maturity of age come to this Sacrament. For, if sudden death should befall them, their purposed Baptism and accomplished repentance and preparation already entered upon will obtain for them grace and forgiveness and salvation. This delay was most wisely advantageous. For it afforded opportunity to weigh the motives, to discover and test the dispositions, to foster the repentance, to elicit and strengthen the purpose of amendment, to instruct them more perfectly in the principles of the faith, and in the rules and practice of Christian life and virtue. Hence anciently only at Easter and Pentecost and with solemn ceremony could this Sacrament

be administered. This was to secure for it greater esteem and holier veneration: juster appreciation followed that which did not become ordinary or frequent. Yet, if danger of death is at hand, especially if those to be baptized fully understand the mysteries of the faith, Baptism is not to be deferred, and may be administered as soon as the faith is embraced.

Every one to be baptized must be willing and resolved to receive this Sacrament. Hence every one is asked whether he wills to receive it. Even in children this will is present and is expressed in the will of the Church. For this Sacrament is not conferred with fruit unless upon those who die to sin and engage to live a new life: and this obviously cannot be done by the unwilling, but must result from their free option and sincere conversion to God.

Faith also is necessary; for our Lord has said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." He who desires Baptism must repent of his past sins and purpose to avoid sin for the future. For how could he put on Christ, and be joined with Him, which is the very meaning of the Sacrament, and yet persevere in sin and vice? Nothing could be more opposed to the Sacrament as the absence of this purpose of sinning no longer. He who is thus minded should be refused this Sacrament. None of the Sacraments are to be received in vain, and thus abused: but the grace of justification and salvation conferred by Baptism are received in vain, and are abused by those who yet purpose "to live according to the flesh, and not according to the Spirit."

Withal, the Sacrament thus received is valid, but its effect remains suspended till these obstacles disappear, and the necessary dispositions supervene. "Do penance," said the Apostle, "and be baptized every one of you." And, in another place, "Do penance and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM.

“And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins.”—St. Luke iii; 3.

The external washing called Baptism was an emblem of the interior purification of the soul. And this purifying of the soul is a prerequisite to a fruitful Baptism.

The necessity of Baptism to all men is laid down by our Lord. Unless men are born again to God by the grace of Baptism, they are begotten of their parents to eternal misery and destruction. “Except a man be born again of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John iii; 5).

This necessity of Baptism is for all; not only those of mature age, but children and infants. If needful for one class, it must likewise be necessary to all; for all lie under the guilt of the same original sin, from which every soul must be cleansed to enter heaven, where nothing defiled can enter. Certainly the Lord would not exclude from the grace of this Sacrament those of whom He said: “Suffer ye, and forbid not the little children to come to Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Those who received His embrace and His blessing would

never be denied the gifts of remission of sin, and entrance into life, which He conveys by this ordinance. As children, by the sin of Adam, by their very birth inherit guilt, though by no personal participation, so, likewise, should children by their rebirth in Christ inherit grace and innocence, though by no personal participation in the Baptism than that which parents and sponsors perform for them.

Although infants cannot believe by the act of their minds, yet they receive the gifts of faith when baptized. Their deficiency is removed by the faith of their parents, if they belong to the faith; or, if not, they stand in the faith of the whole body of the saints by whose hands we may truly believe they are offered in Baptism, and by whose charity they are joined to the communion of the Holy Ghost.

How great must then be the guilt of these parents who neglect to have their children receive this Sacrament so necessary to salvation, or who defer it longer than necessary through carelessness or for frivolous reasons, especially as these infants, because of their tenderness and weakness, are, above all other people, in greater danger of death. It is the first duty of parents to have their children enriched and fortified against danger by the grace of this Sacrament as speedily as may be without risk from weakness or exposure. If necessary, the priest should be summoned to administer this Sacrament at the home: the baptized should afterwards be brought to the church that the solemn ceremonies may be supplied.

However, this urgency does not hold with regard to adults born either in or out of the Church who

are to be baptized. For the Church has wisely ordained that these be proved as to their dispositions, and be thoroughly instructed in Christian doctrine and practice and maxims of virtue before being allowed to this Sacrament. Hence all such are first to be accounted catechumens, and according to ancient custom were baptized only at Easter and Whitsuntide. For there would seem to be more veneration for the Sacrament if but bestowed rarely and with more solemn ceremony. While if a sudden death should befall those thus delayed, the purpose that adults have of receiving the Sacrament and their penance for their former evil life will avail for grace and salvation. Yet delaying this Sacrament beyond the time which the Church has prescribed for instructing the neophyte and testing his virtue and constancy, should be carefully avoided. Besides, if Baptism be unduly deferred, the person is deprived of the grace and benefits of the other Sacraments which Baptism must needs precede.

They who are converted to the Lord and have received the light of faith should be taught that their conversion can be consummated only by their re-birth in the waters of Baptism. By this Sacrament the soul is purified from every stain or blemish of sin it had ever committed, and strengthened and adorned with grace, by which it can shun sin thereafter, and hold fast to justice and innocence.

Every one who receives Baptism must die to sin and pledge himself to live a new life. For no one should undertake the profession of being a follower of Christ unless he be resolved to put aside forever everything that is abhorrent to the gospel of the

Redeemer. His word must be the law, and His example the practice of every one who expects to come by the grace and salvation conferred in Baptism. Hence Baptism cannot be given to those unwilling, or who refuse it: only to those who are willing and resolved to receive it. This free and cheerful will must be had by all and made known before it is administered. Even the will of the infant is presumed, and expressed by the will of the Church.

Faith is required for the fruitful reception of this Sacrament: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," are the words of Christ. The office of teaching all men was to be discharged by the Apostles before baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every one must be contrite for his sins and repent of his past disorders, and determine to shun sin thereafter. For, while the Sacrament is meant primarily for the remission of original sin, it at the same time remits the actual sins of him who receives it: for pardon of original sin cannot coexist with actual sin unforgiven; the grace of God cannot be poured into the soul to destroy the one so as not to destroy the other. But actual sin cannot be forgiven even in Baptism without true sorrow and true purpose of amendment. Wherefore, that the Sacrament be received with fruit, there must be in the soul of the receiver sorrow for all sin.

Without this necessary disposition no one should be baptized. Nothing could be more opposed to the grace and virtue of holy Baptism than the state of soul of him who does not grieve for sins and pur-

pose amendment. Such a one would "put on Christ," and yet retain the livery of Satan; he would indeed serve two masters; he would at the same time live according to the flesh and according to the spirit. Such a one of course receives the Sacrament, if he intends to receive what the Church intends to give: but he does not receive the fruit and grace of the Sacrament; they remain suspended until the required dispositions supervene, if ever. If not, he is as if he had never received it, with the sin of sacrilege added to his other sins, original and actual. Therefore did St. Peter say to the Jews: "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you" (Acts iii; 19). The penance precedes the Baptism.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

THE INCARNATION.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”—John i; 14.

FAITH proposes, and in the sincerity of our souls we are to believe and confess, that Jesus Christ is true God, and true man; begotten, indeed, as God, of the Father, before all ages and generations; but as man, born in time of His mother the Virgin Mary.

While we acknowledge His twofold nativity, yet He is but one Son. For it is in the one Divine Person that the Divine and Human natures meet. In His Divine generation as the Only Son of the Father, He has no brethren; for we are but the creatures of His hands. In His Human generation as the Son of a human mother, many are called and accounted by Him His brethren: that is, those who have by faith accepted Him as their Lord, and who in truth manifest their faith in Him by works of charity. Wherefore the Apostle designates Him, “The first begotten among many brethren.” They together with Him will obtain the glory of His Father’s inheritance.

The redemption of men from sin, and their liberation from the bondage of Satan, and restoration

to the liberty of the children of God, was, beyond all conception, a most marvellous manifestation of the goodness of God. Yet the manner in which it was accomplished was more marvellous still: the manner of the giving incomparably greater than the gift itself: nothing more glorious and magnificent nor evincing greater goodness and love could have entered even the Divine mind, or been compassed by Divine power.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when He took upon Himself human nature in the womb of the Virgin, was not, as other men are, conceived of human seed; but beyond the whole order of nature, was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; so that the same Divine Person remaining God, which He was from eternity, became man, which before He was not.

This true sense of the third article of the Creed plainly appears in the declaration of the Council of Constantinople: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." This, too, the beloved disciple John, who imbibed the knowledge of this profound mystery from the bosom of our Lord and Saviour Himself, declares: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Word was the Second Person of the Divine Nature.

"The figure of the substance and the splendor of the glory" of the eternal Father assumed human nature in such wise that, of the Divine and human natures, the person was one and the same. Thus the actions and properties of both natures were

preserved: "The glory of the Divine nature did not destroy the Human; nor did the Human diminish the Divine."

Although the Second Person alone assumed human nature, this one Person did not accomplish the mystery of the Incarnation: all the Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—concurred therein. For all that God does outside of Himself, is the common work of the Three Divine Persons; nor does One act more than another, nor One without the Other. Thus was the Incarnation of the Son of God effected. Because the Incarnation results from and manifests the infinite goodness and love of God, this work is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, by Whom the Incarnate Word was conceived in the womb of His Virgin Mother; according to the usage of Holy Scripture, which ascribes any work of God to that Divine Person Whose Personal attribute shines forth therein: as Power to the Father, Wisdom to the Son, Love to the Holy Ghost.

The body of Christ was formed of the most pure blood of His Virgin Mother; for the bodies of all men are formed of the blood of their mothers: therein is His human nature. The moment the Blessed Virgin consented to the message of the angel, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word," the most holy body of Christ was conceived in her womb by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and a human soul was infused therein, and His Divinity joined to the soul and body. Thus He was at once both perfect God and perfect man. This it is that surpasses the order of nature, and

the compass of the human understanding. Miraculous as to the Divine agency which formed the body: passing miraculous and comprehensible to God alone, that a human person did not result from this union of a human body and human soul, but that a Divine Person was substituted, and took eternal possession of this body and soul, joining them to Its Divine nature: thus were there two natures and one Person.

As in the same moment of His conception He was perfect God and perfect man, the Blessed Virgin, by giving Him a human nature which never did exist except united to the Godhead, is truly the Mother of God. Just as truly as a mother is the mother of the whole child, body, soul, person, although she has no part in the creation of its soul.

“Behold, thou wilt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus; He will be great, and will be called Son of the Most High” (Luke i; 31-32). Hence St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, exclaimed, “Whence comes this to me, that the Mother of my Lord come to me?”—words which clearly imply the conception of the Son of God, and the Divine maternity of Mary. This union of the Divine Word, simultaneous and one act with the conception of Christ’s human nature, is indissoluble and from the moment eternal.

As the body of Christ was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary not at all by human agency, after the manner of man, but only by the power of the Holy Ghost; so, also, on His conception His soul was inundated with an overflowing abundance

of the seven-fold gifts and all graces of the same Holy Spirit. For, "God gave not His Spirit to Him by measure, as to other men adorned with grace and holiness"; but he poured plentifully into his soul all grace, "that of His fullness we might all receive" (John i; 16 and 3; 34.)

While He had the spirit by which holy men are made the adopted sons of God, we must not think that adoption can by any means be suitable or applied to Him Who by His very nature was the consubstantial and co-eternal Son of God,—One with Him in all save their Personal relations.

This, then, is the stupendous mystery of God's assuming our nature, incomprehensible to the human mind and unutterable by human tongue; which with humility and faith we are to believe and adore; and ponder in our souls without seeking to search or narrowly pry into; because that which belongs to faith cannot, without danger, be scrutinized by mere reason. Contemplated in the light of faith, it conveys wholesome fruit to the soul; for it were impossible to realize, even imperfectly (as it must always be), that God became man for our salvation—that we might be born again, and become the children of God—without learning those lessons that conduce to salvation, and which it most behooves us to learn, if we are not to waste our lives and neglect the one thing needful.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS.

ON PRAYER.

“ And Anna departed not from the temple, but by fastings and prayers, worshipped night and day.”
St. Luke ii; 37.

Although prayer is a wholesome good, yet to be profitable it must be properly performed: “ For what we ask, we oftentimes do not obtain, because we ask amiss,” says St. James. We must pray in spirit and in truth. For “ God is a spirit; and they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth ” (John iv; 24).

To pray in spirit and in truth, is to pray with earnest and ardent desire of soul, which, although unexpressed in word, is yet known to God, to Whom lie open our most secret thoughts. This, however, does not exclude the utterance of these desires, or what is called vocal prayer. The one may be called the soul, the other the body of prayer. And, like body and soul, they mutually assist and co-operate with each other. Of course, the prayer that proceeds from the soul is far more excellent than that which comes from the mouth alone; indeed this last is worthless. Yet vocal prayer assists the soul by stirring it up, inflaming the intention

and attention of the mind, and kindling devotion. As we are moved by the words of another, so may our souls be moved by the words we utter with the tongue. Hence the public prayers of the Church help private prayer, augment the religious earnestness, and stir up the devotion of the faithful.

This practice of praying in spirit is peculiar to Christians, and altogether unknown to infidels, of whom Christ says: "And when ye pray, gabble not as the heathen do: for they think that for their many words they may be heard. Be not ye, therefore, like to them; for your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before ye ask Him" (St. Matt. vi; 7-8. Whilst He forbids much speaking thus after the manner of the heathen, far from rejecting long prayers which proceed from earnestness and enduring zeal of soul, by His own example of spending nights and days in prayer and thrice repeating the same words, He commends them and urges us to them. Empty sounds and unmeaning words are what we must shun.

Christ deters us from the example of the hypocrites, who pray not from the heart. "And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Truly, I say to you, they have got their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee" (St. Matt. vi; 5-6). This chamber is not only the heart of man, into which it is not enough for prayer to enter, but also

some recess or retreat closed to every intrusion or external distraction that could interrupt or diminish the recollection and fervor of prayer.

Nor should we desist from prayer, as many do, because having prayed a few times, they obtain not what they ask. For we should persevere therein; we should pray and never falter. In this essential duty taught by Christ and His Apostles we should never grow languid or weary; if at any time the will fail us, we should use prayer to obtain from God strength to persevere. Nor should we pray without importunity: assiduity should mark our petitions to God. Christ teaches us the need of this by the example of the judge whom He instances, who, whilst "he feared not God, nor regarded man," yet, overcome by the importunity and assiduity of the widow, granted her entreaty. She to whom justice had been so long denied at length prevailed: "Yet because this widow is troublesome to me, I will do her justice, lest by her continued coming she weary me," saith the unjust judge. "And will not God do justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night: and will He bear long in their regard?" (St. Luke xviii; 5-6.) Earnestness and perseverance are the conditions of gaining favors from those able to confer them in this world: how much more necessary, and how much greater should be our diligence and zeal to obtain what relates to salvation—so far above any worldly interest?

It is the will of the Son of God that our prayers should reach the Father in His name; for, by His merits and the grace of His intercession, they ac-

quire such efficacy as to be granted by our heavenly Father: "Truly, truly, I say to you: if ye ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have not asked anything in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (St. John xvi; 23-24). "Whatever ye shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do." It is most just that all our prayers should ascend to the throne of God in "that name which is above all names, and in which alone it is given to men to be saved"; the name of Him from Whose merits comes all their efficacy, as from His blood came all our salvation.

We should imitate the ardent fervor of holy men in prayer; and, after the example of the Apostles, join thanksgiving with prayer. Above all, to discharge this duty worthily and to secure the success of our prayers, we should prepare our souls: dismissing therefrom all distractions and worldly affairs, as far as may be; and not being as those "who tempt God" by their inattention and carelessness in prayer. In approaching some temporal king we feel his majesty and are filled with awe and respect: not less, surely, should be our recollection of mind and profound homage as suppliants before the King of kings and Lord of lords, importuning Him for our soul's salvation.

Fasting and almsgiving are to be joined to prayer. Fasting is indeed closely related to prayer; they mutually assist one another; "this kind of devil cannot be cast out but by prayer and fasting," said Christ. For when the body is surfeited or loaded with meat and drink, the mind is so pressed

down and clogged that it cannot raise itself to God in prayer, nor have a zest for what should be the subject matter of prayer. Fasting represses vice, elevates the mind, bestows virtue.

Almsgiving, also, has an intimate connexion with prayer; for who can say that he has charity who, seeing his neighbor in want, and being able, refuses to relieve him? Or, with what front will he that is wanting in charity, beg assistance from God, unless beseeching pardon for his sins, he at the same time implore charity of God?

This threefold remedy was divinely ordained to further man's salvation. It is the triple sovereign corrective of all sin. "Whatever is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." To these three maladies are opposed as medicines or wholesome correctives: fasting, to subdue the flesh; almsgiving, to restrain the graspings of avarice; prayer, to root out pride and plant humility.

Moreover, by these remedies we make amends to those injured by our sins; in which we offend God, or wrong our neighbor, or injure ourselves. For we appease God and reconcile Him to us by prayer; we redeem the wrongs done our neighbor and compensate him by alms; we chastise ourselves, and wash away past defilements by fasting and mortification. Although these remedies are applicable to all kinds of sin, yet they are suitable and especially available for those which we have mentioned.

THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

ON THE HOLY NAME.

“And after eight days were past that the child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, so called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”—St. Luke ii; 21.

WHAT Circumcision did for the Jew, Baptism does for the Christian: Circumcision availed for salvation; Baptism avails, and is absolutely necessary for salvation. Circumcision was a figure of Baptism. It was conferred the eighth day. A name was given to the child circumcised, as it is now given when baptized. Thus we read in to-day's gospel that the Divine Infant was called Jesus. This name declared His character and mission into the world as the Redeemer and Saviour of men. In Baptism the name given should always be of one of the saints of God. And this, that the child may always have him for imitation, and that the saint may become the guardian of the safety and salvation of his body and soul.

Jesus is the proper name of Him who is God and Man, and it signifies a Saviour. And this name was given to Him, not by chance, nor by the judgment or will of men, but by the counsel and command of God. For it was thus announced by the

Angel to Mary, His mother: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus"; and afterwards he not only commanded Joseph, who was espoused to the Virgin, to call the child by that name, but also declares the reason why He was to be so called: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take to thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (St. Matt. i; 20-21).

There were many in the Holy Scriptures of this name. The son of Nun, who led the people, delivered out of bondage by Moses, into the land of promise, was known as Jesus; Josedech, also, the son of a priest, and many others.

Much more truly, however, shall we not think that our Saviour is to be called by this name, Who has brought light, liberty, and salvation, not to one people or nation, but to all men of all ages—the whole human race, suffering not famine nor enslaved in Egyptian or Babylonian bondage, but sitting in the shadow of death, and miserably fettered by the galling chains of sin and the devil,—Who has acquired for them the right and inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, Who has reconciled them to God the Father? In them we see Christ our Lord foreshadowed, by Whom the benefits we have mentioned were loaded on the human race. Now all those names which were predicted to be by Divine appointment imposed upon the Son of God, are to be referred to this one name Jesus; whilst

the rest, in a manner hinted or intimated, the salvation He was to bestow upon us, this itself fully contains the whole force and character of the universal salvation of mankind.

To the name of Jesus is also added that of Christ, which signifies anointed, and is a name expressive both of honor and office, nor peculiar to one thing, but common to many; for our fathers of the olden time were wont to call Christs the priests and kings whom God, because of the dignity of this office, commanded to be anointed. Priests are they who, by assiduous prayers, commend the people to God who offer sacrifice to God, who pray for the people. Kings are entrusted with the government of the people, and upon them it supremely devolves to maintain the authority of law, to safeguard the life of the innocent, and to avenge the audacity of the guilty. As these duties seem to reflect God's majesty on earth, kings and priests, on being made such, were anointed with oil. Prophets also were anointed, because as the oracles and ambassadors of God they disclosed to men the secrets of heaven, and by salutary precepts, and the prophesying of future events, admonished men to reform their lives and characters.

Jesus Christ coming into the world, assumed the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king; and for these reasons He was called Christ, and anointed for the discharge of these offices, not by the work of any mortal, but by the power and virtue of His heavenly Father; not indeed with earthly ointment, but with spiritual oil, when the fullness and grace of the Holy Spirit and a more copious abundance

of all gifts than any other created nature could receive, was poured into His most holy soul. This the prophet very clearly shows, when addressing the Redeemer Himself: "Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." The same also and much more plainly is set forth by the prophet Isaiah in these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me; He hath sent me to preach to the meek" (Isaiah lxi; 1).

Jesus Christ, therefore, was the great prophet and teacher, Who taught us the will of God, and by Whose teachings the whole world has received the knowledge of our heavenly Father; and to Him this name preeminently and surpassingly belongs, for all whosoever were dignified with the name of prophet were His disciples, and sent particularly for the end that they might preannounce this Prophet Who was to come to save all men.

Christ was likewise a priest, not indeed of the order from which, in the Old Law, priests were of the Levitical tribe, but of that of which David the prophet sang: "Thou art a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec." Of which subject the Apostle writing to the Hebrews accurately pursues the argument. But we acknowledge Christ to be a king also, not only as He is God, but as He is man and a partaker of our nature; of Whom the Angel testifies: "He shall reign forever in the house of Jacob, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Now this kingdom of Christ is spiritual and eter-

nal; it is begun indeed on earth, it is perfected in heaven. And by His wonderful providence He indeed performs for His Church the duties of King. He rules her; He protects her from attacks and snares; He prescribes laws for her; He bestows upon her not only holiness and righteousness, but also affords her power and strength to persevere. Although both the good and bad are comprised within the limits of this kingdom—and accordingly all men do of right belong to it—those, however, beyond others experience the supreme goodness and beneficence of our King, who, according to His precepts, lead an upright, unblemished and innocent life. Nor did this kingdom come to Him by hereditary or human law, although He derived His descent from the noblest kings; but He was a King, therefore, because God conferred upon that Man whatever power, majesty, and dignity of which the nature of man is capable. To Him, therefore, did He deliver the government of the whole world; and to Him all things, what is already begun to be done, shall be fully and perfectly subjected on the day of Judgment.

The Name of Jesus Christ is the most endearing, the most cherished, the most transporting name on earth or in heaven; Saviour Anointed brings hope and peace and joy to every creature, human and angelic. To men it brings salvation, to angels new joy, to devils terror and dismay. Holy souls adore that Name, sinners look to it for pardon; the blasphemer even pays an unconscious homage by invoking it in blasphemy as the holiest name he knows.

“Wherefore also,” says the Apostle, “God hath

highly exalted Him, and given Him the Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Philip ii; 9-11).

"No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than JESU's Name,
The Saviour of mankind."

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

THE VALUE OF TIME.

"The days of our years are three score and ten years."—Psalm lxxxix.

THERE is nothing with which we are more familiar than time. Yet there is nothing that we understand so little of. Time and space are too great mysteries staring every one in the face; and yet no human mind can comprehend their real nature. That which our imagination pictures of each is essentially different from that which our mind, as far as it goes, teaches.

Time is not a part of eternity; nor is eternity time indefinitely prolonged; nor is time coincident with eternity. Eternity is essentially indivisible. It is at once the complete and the simultaneous possession of all duration. Eternity had no beginning and can have no end. Time is essentially divisible, for it is succession. Before the world there was no time because there was not succession. Time essentially belongs to the world whose changes and events it measures; when the world ceases, time will be no more.

There is nothing more illusive than time. While we all are sure that it will end, we feel and act as if it were never to end. Because we know not when

it will terminate, we live as if it were never to terminate. After spending the greater part of our years, it may be when we are nearly at their end, whatever we may know, we act as if a lengthened future were before us; the years that have passed do not seem to curtail the prospect we have of those yet to come. The period of our days recedes into the future as we advance. Thus, victims of this delusion, we persist in our blindness till the end is at hand; and even then we can scarcely believe it. Because we know not the day and the hour, we live as if time had no day or hour which is its last.

It is the height of wisdom to unteach ourselves this error, to break this illusion, and to realize how very short time is; how very few are its years or even its days. "Man, born of a woman, lives a very little while, and is subject to much misery," is the experience that is concentrated into even what may seem the longest life.

Realizing the shortness of the time of our life, of the little span from the cradle to the grave, we enter into the sentiments of the Psalmist, "O Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may learn wisdom."

How learn wisdom from numbering his days? because no one can be wise with the wisdom of salvation who does not feel the shortness of life, and the consequent need of spending it for the purpose for which God has given it. When we come to feel how few are our days, and the mighty alternatives that depend upon how we employ our life, we learn to dole out with sparing hand those portions of it that we give to the things of a world that so soon

passes away; and we treasure as the very grace of God the opportunity of time which He has given us to achieve eternal salvation.

Seventy years are the allotted period in Scripture to a virtuous and well-spent life. Few there are that reach them. Fewer still are they that deserve them. Fewer even still that have the health and vigor to survive them and can promise themselves immunity from deadly ailments; this no one can do. However, imagine such years to be the appointed period of your lives: reduce those years to days, that you may not be deluded with the mention of years, and the better to bring home to your hearts how few, how very few are the days of human life. Twenty-five thousand days pass from the day of birth to the day of death in such a long and unusual life. But how much of them have already gone by? perhaps one-half, or even three-fourths. Then you have but the remainder, twelve thousand five hundred, or about six thousand days. The greater part is usually gone by before people give themselves to so sober and sobering reflections. Take from the few thousand days that yet remain to even the youngest among you, the hours that, added, become days, which must be spent in sleep and toil and the necessary nourishment of the body and the duties we owe to others, and how little remains to us! Scarcely enough to make peace with God and to live a Christian life for even a little while before rendering an account of all our days, and thoughts and words and works. It is not sufficient that we know this truth, or any other truth on which salvation depends: it is necessary that we realize them, that

we act upon them, and make them principles and motives of our life.

Short as time is, it is a period of probation, upon which depends everlasting misery, or bliss. Wherefore it is to be used according to the purpose for which it has been vouchsafed. This period of life which appears so long to the unreflecting, and which is so short to Him to Whom a thousand years are as one day; this duration in which there is no present, for every moment is no sooner come than it is gone; this dream from which we are so soon awakened; this phantom which so soon vanishes; this illusion which so shortly yields to the eternal realities; this "guest of a night," this arrow that flies through the air, is given to us to achieve an eternal destiny. Heaven, with its never-ending bliss, or hell, with its never-ending woe, is the issue of our legitimate or illegitimate use of this brief, this very brief, moment, which men call time. For this alone has it been given: for this alone should it be employed; or, if other objects are sought, they should be always secondary, and sought only in reference to—that is, so far as they conduce to, and refrained from in so far as they hinder or endanger—"the one thing needful." This is the whole of a true life, and that renders it, next to God's grace, His most precious gift.

Not, therefore, for fortune, or riches, or fame, or position, or pleasure, or providing an inheritance for offspring, or any worldly purpose, has time been given and men placed in it. It is too short and too precious to be wasted on perishable objects: eternity alone is worthy of it; and small wages, indeed, it is

to be paid for such a prize: a moment for unending duration; a moment for immortal bliss.

To spend, therefore, the time of life in pursuit of temporal good to the exclusion of salvation is the grossest of disorders, the greatest of sins. To give more time to the things of this life than to eternal objects is to contravene the providence of God and to endanger our immortal souls. To make our eternal destiny the first and foremost and absorbing object of our lives, and to employ time and all that this world possesses as means thereto, is the wisdom of the Gospel: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else shall be added thereto."

Evidently, time given for so divine a purpose, and upon which rest results so momentous and eternal, is something of which we should make a most conscientious use and for which we shall be held to a rigid account. See ye that it be spent in a way that will give you no anxiety or remorse on that day which will be your last.

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

REVELATION IS DIVINE.

“And seeing the star, they rejoiced with very great joy.”—St. Matt. ii; 10.

THE object of faith is the truths of Divine revelation. That this revelation is truly Divine is shown by extrinsic testimony and intrinsic proof.

That this Revelation was the fulfillment of prophecies made from the beginning of which God alone could be the Inspirer and Author; that it was made by the Son of God Who demonstrated His character and mission by fulfilling all prophecy, no less than by His own works and miracles such as no other man had ever wrought, and prophecies subsequently fulfilled; Who showed Himself the Son of God in power, in holiness, and by His glorious resurrection from the dead; Whose truth was sealed by the attesting voice of the Holy Ghost descending upon the Apostles in fulfillment of His own promise; Whose revelation was spread throughout the world by no human power, but in spite of all obstacles that human power could oppose; which overcame all the assaults of human skepticism and human passion; which was sealed in the blood of uncounted martyrs; which alone has survived the vicissitudes of time and the trials that have proved fatal to all things

else,—these and many more like arguments form what is called the extrinsic proof that Revelation is divine. But it is to the intrinsic proof that we now direct your attention.

Revelation is divine because it teaches nothing contrary to or condemned in the light of reason; if it did, it could not be from God. For in the natural order, the mind is as much God's gift as revelation in the supernatural order. It is given to direct man in things proper to it. It fulfills its purpose as revelation fulfills its own. Revelation gives new light and truth to the mind, inculcates the true rule of virtue and the moral bettering of the whole man. It raises him to God; it reveals his true destiny and supplies the necessary aids to attain it. The insufficiency of reason to teach religious truth, or to make known man's final destiny, or to restrain the vagaries of the human mind, or to control the sinful proneness of the heart, is shown by the disgraceful errors and corruptions of mind, and heart, and worship into which nature was sunk, and which befouled the supremest human genius, before Revelation shed its light into the world.

Revelation is divine because it is in perfect accord with the teachings of conscience, and with our in-born sense of justice, purity, honesty and truth. Conscience is the voice of God speaking in the soul; it is the light that lightens every man born into the world; it is the eternal or natural law engraven in the heart by the finger of God; He is the legislator of this law and its custodian.

Revelation is divine because it explains the antagonism between the law of the mind and the law

of our members, the unceasing rising from sin and relapsing, and the concupiscence which enslaves man. This is due to the original alienation of man from God. By that catastrophe our moral nature has been shattered and deteriorated.

Revelation is divine because it discloses man's supernatural destiny, which reason could have never known. It gives him grace and strength to reascend to the plane that will lead him thereto, which by himself he could never do. It rescues him from the errors and misery of false worship and moral evil into which reason, blind and unaided, fell. It lets him into the knowledge of correct morality and the true adoration of God—something which by himself he could never reach: for reason, unable to teach even natural truth with certainty, could never discover supernatural truth. Revelation condemns idols and plurality of Gods—errors condemned by reason.

Revelation is divine because it opens to man the hope and method and certainty of reconciliation with God, after sin. As sin, in itself, by its very nature is irremissible, the human mind, left to itself, could have never comprehended the possibility of its forgiveness: if now nothing is more familiar, it is owing to the light shed abroad in the world and in our hearts by Divine revelation. Still less could unaided nature have done aught towards its destruction, or its atonement, or the restoration of sinful man to the friendship of the Creator. Even the divinest propitiation could exert no absolute claim upon Divine justice: much less, incomparably, could man who had sinned.

In the belief of a Revelation having been made, and of a Redeemer having already come, all the fundamental truths of religion are intelligible: without this belief of the first there is no solution of difficulties, and mysteries are made more impenetrable; without the belief of the second, Revelation contradicts itself, for all evidence shows that the Messiah must have come.

Revelation is divine because it gives to man the knowledge of those truths connected with his past, present, and future, which his mind and heart and will desire to know. It solves the mystery of the origin and end of human society; it justifies the providence of God; explains the success of evil; the defeat of good; the cause of man's unhappiness, and points out the means by which he may be made happy.

Revelation is true because it teaches man to control passion. Reason indicates man's rank in nature and his superiority above brute creatures. Propensities which in them are gratified without sin must in him be governed by reason; animal feelings must yield to the light of the mind. A religion giving a loose rein to brute instincts cannot be from God.

Revelation is divine because it is presented to men in a way that does not subvert the order of providence: does not coerce free will, nor compel submission, nor decline the working of second causes after the course of physical nature, as it would if made known to every man in particular, and not entrusted to a few as its teachers. This resemblance to the method of nature bespeaks the work of the Creator.

Revelation is divine in that we are called upon to accept it by faith: which of all methods is best adapted to all capacities, the highest and the lowest, the enlightened and the illiterate. Even for truths which are not absolutely above our compass, the surest, shortest, safest teaching of them is by faith. This plan is adapted to every order of intelligence: worthy of the loftiest, absolutely necessary to the low and illiterate, and the best for all.

Revelation is divine because it was confided to men who, when prepared by the Lord and the Holy Spirit, were of the loftiest types of character, of the most heroic virtues, the most disinterested motives, the most sacrificing zeal, the most uncompromising champions of the truth, sealing their testimony with their blood and life. We feel in our hearts that God would not employ the wicked, while they are such, as the custodians and announcers of His revelation. A bad man may indeed sit in the chair of Moses, or in the chair of Peter, in a line of teachers divinely appointed, or prophecy may issue from Baalim or David. But this is the exception rendered necessary for the preservation of an uninterrupted succession and for sake of the office which such a one fills. No such men would ever be made use of as the first apostles and teachers of a new revelation.

In all these considerations you have the highest moral evidence of the truth of revelation, evidence sufficient to gain the assent of all who are on the lookout for a revelation from heaven, and who are not more disposed to reject it, if found, than embrace it.

SUNDAY WITHIN OCTAVE OF EPIPHANY.

DUTIES TO PARENTS.

“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and He was subject to them.”—St. Luke ii; 51.

AFTER the honor and worship of God, Who as the Creator and the Father of all is above all, it is not to be doubted that our parents are to be loved and obeyed; and the whole force of this filial love must reside in and spring from the love of our heavenly and everlasting Father. Certainly those of whom we are begotten, and who are the human instruments of our life and being, employed by God to impart to us all that we possess, should never cease to be the objects of our profoundest respect and unfailing love. They are, in a manner, images of the immortal God, and in them we behold the image of our own beginning. And who could be so recreant to the holiest instinct of his nature as to deny the claims of a mother to the endearing love and implicit obedience of her offspring, when we consider the benefits they have received from her, and what she deserves from them whom with untold care and trouble she carried in her womb, and with racking pain and piercing anguish brought into the world, and reared with sleepless vigilance and

unceasing anxiety? There should be no hindrance or stop to this love and obedience which we owe parents unless, perchance, it conflicts with the law of God and higher duty which we should render to Him Who is the Lord and Master of all—parents and children. For, children are to prefer the will of God to the pleasure of parents; they should always be guided by the injunction: “We must obey God rather than man.”

We honor anyone when we think honorably of him and highly esteem that which belongs to him. Love, veneration, obedience and reverence are all implied in honor. This word says more than love or fear; although parents are to be both loved and feared. For he that loves does not always venerate and reverence; and he that fears does not always love: but he that is truly honored is also loved and feared.

The honor which we pay our parents should proceed from our love and inmost feelings of our soul. This is due to them, especially as they so love us that for us they refuse no labor, no endeavors, no dangers, no sacrifices. Besides, nothing so fills them with consolation as the filial love of those whom they so dearly love. Solomon rose up to meet his mother, and did her homage, and seated her on his throne at his right hand. Joseph in Egypt, next to the king in honor and wealth, with all honor entertained his father on his arrival in Egypt.

It belongs to the honor owed to parents that we beg God earnestly that success and prosperity may attend them, that they may obtain love and esteem among men, and become acceptable also to God and

the blessed in heaven, whose company may be their eternal portion.

We should honor our parents by seeking to do their will and pleasure: by seeking and listening to and sedulously following their counsels: studying to conform ourselves to them in their good example and commendable deeds. This imitation instinctively betrays our respect and love for them. "Children," says the Apostle, "obey your parents in all things; for this is pleasing in the Lord." Also, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just." "Hear," says Solomon, "my son, the instructions of thy father, and forego not the law of thy mother; that grace may be added to thy head, and bracelets to thy neck."

Parents are to be relieved in their wants and supplied with the necessities and comforts of life; is taught by the very instinct of nature, and by every dictate of gratitude; even the most languid or coolest could not remain unstirred at knowing of parents' indigence or their appeal for aid and comfort. Even gifts made to God or His Church cannot compensate or take the place of the aid we should render parents requiring our succor, as we learn from the words of Christ reproaching this impiety of the Pharisees. He characterizes it as a transgression, and a making void of the commandments of God (Matt. xv; 4).

In the season of sickness and when death draws near, children are to be more than ever careful and vigilant to discharge all the duties which at all times but especially then lie upon their consciences. Everything that relates to the state of soul and the

necessary preparation for the confession of sin, and the reception of the other Sacraments to be administered at such times, is to be sedulously cared for by dutiful children. They should provide for them the counsels of pious and goodly persons who by their conversation may elevate their minds above the concerns of this life, fill them with cheerful hope of immortality; and imbuing their souls with sentiments of faith, hope, charity, sorrow, forgiveness of enemies, they may place their whole trust and hope and security in God: thus leading them not at all to dread death, seeing that it is the appointed lot of all, but to actually long for it, inasmuch as it hastens their entrance into the days of eternity.

Nor does the honor due to parents cease with death: it should follow them in death, and prompt us to bestow upon them decent and becoming funerals and respectable burials; that we faithfully procure frequent and anniversary prayers and sacrifices; that we scrupulously pay their just debts, and fulfill their dying bequests and testamentary injunctions.

Not only the blessed and eternal life, which is the reward of faith and virtue, is promised to the dutiful child, but this, also, which we live in this world. "For piety," says the Apostle, "is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Those, then, that honor their parents, show gratitude to them from whom they have received light and life, are promised a long and happy life to enjoy those benefits for which they show themselves truly grateful: justly and deservedly are their days prolonged even to great age. Not only length of days, but rest and

quiet and safety and grace to live well, which is implied in the words, "That thou mayst live a long time, that it may be well with thee." These good things are advantageous to those whose manner of life ensures Divine grace; for otherwise there is no assurance of the divine promise. Sometimes those who are most dutiful to parents enjoy not this length of years, but are cut short, dying often in comparative youth. This is because it is for their salvation to leave this sinful life, lest by further stay here they forsake virtue and duty; "For they are suddenly snatched away, lest malice should alter their understanding, or deceit beguile their soul." Or, because, according to Isaias, "the righteous man is taken away from the face of evil."

As the dutiful child is thus rewarded, so, also, the wicked child is visited with the most grievous punishment and God's hottest anger and most unsparing malediction, as may be seen in Holy Scripture.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

MATRIMONY.

“And the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding.”—St. John ii; 1-2.

It were well that all men were what the Apostle would have them, continent like himself. For nothing in this world can be happier than that state in which the mind, freed from worldly cares, and restrained from the lusts of the flesh, finds rest and contentment only in the study of piety and the contemplation of heavenly truths.

But as this is not given to everyone, and as each one has his own proper gift and calling, the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony, endowed with grace and blessing, is presented to those who are willing to enter it. This holy ordinance, proceeding from nature and originally established by God, is truly a Sacrament of the New Law, having been made such by Our Divine Lord. Not only this; but so highly did He honor marriage that He was present at it, and made the occasion that on which He wrought His first miracle. Great are the benefits and blessings that flow from the maintenance of the holiness of matrimony: great are the evils and curses that flow from its desecration and contempt.

The word matrimony signifies its nature: gift or office of mother, because the woman desires to be married chiefly that she may become a mother: or because it is the part of a mother to conceive, to bring forth, and to bring up. It is called wedlock, because the parties are joined, or yoked, or locked together in one bond. It is called marriage or nuptials because for modesty maids veiled themselves: thereby intimating obedience and subjection to their husbands.

Matrimony requires inward consent, outward pact or agreement expressed by words, and the bond which thence arises; yet the essence of matrimony is the bond which arises from the mutual consent. Hence matrimony is defined as the conjugal union of a man and woman, lawful persons, observing an undivided oneness of life.

As already remarked, natural matrimony had God for its Author. And even as such He made it perpetual and indissoluble: for "what God has joined together, no one can put asunder," said Christ. It has been made much more indissoluble by being raised to a sacramental character. As such, it reaches the highest perfection in itself, and in everything that belongs to it as a natural contract. The essential ends of marriage forbid its dissolution: require that the two parties shall be one flesh, two in one.

Among these essential purposes is the procreation of offspring; and this not to be sharers of our goods or honors or for any worldly end, but to be made members of Christ's mystical body, and to enjoy with Him everlasting bliss and glory in the life to

come. Love of children, not the gratification of lust, should be the dominant motive in entering this state. Hence, they who hinder conception or procure abortion are guilty of deliberate murder and desecrate this holy Sacrament.

After the fall of man, consequent on the loss of original justice, the flesh rebelled against reason and the spirit: to subdue this rising of the flesh, which is called concupiscence, is a secondary office of matrimony. Wherefore the Apostle says: "Because of fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

In this mysterious union of husband and wife, which is indeed a sacred sign of Christ's mysterious union with His spouse the Church, and in which the husband is the head, as Christ is the Head of the Church, and in which the wife is subject to her husband as the Church is subject to Christ, Sacramental grace is given, which perfects the natural love and seals the indissoluble union, and enables the parties to love one another with a holy love, and to bring up their children in the fear and love of God. This grace comes, as all graces, from the merits of the passion and death of Christ. For all the Sacraments are the vehicles and channels through which that unbounded ocean of merits is conveyed to the souls of men for whom it was merited. Hence all strange and unhallowed loves and attachments and embraces are an abomination to the marriage honorable and bed undefiled which this Sacrament requires. Even the pagans, whose marriages had none of the Sacramental grace and virtue, recognized something divine in matrimony,

and for that reason abhorred and punished with grievous punishment all that was contrary thereto or that perverted or abused the ordinance of nature.

Not alone from the indissoluble nature of the marriage contract, and as a Sacrament, but from the explicit words of Christ is it obvious that no such thing as divorce is allowed by the law of Christ. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. . . . Therefore now they are not two but one flesh" (St. Matt. xv; 9). Words which are destructive to any pretended right to more than one living husband or wife. And again: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marries another, commits adultery; and if the wife put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery." There could be no adultery in marrying another wife, if more than one wife were allowed: the circumstances of one being put away, or kept at home, would not alter the case. If divorce were in accord with the law of Christ, there would be no adultery in one or both of the parties marrying again. But Christ says: "Every one that puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery" (Matt. xix; 18).

Death alone dissolves Christian marriage. Hear the words of the Apostle Paul: "A woman is bound to the law, for so long a time as her husband lives; but if her husband die, she is freed from that law; she may be married to whom she pleases, only in the Lord" (I. Cor. vii; 39). And again, to those who are joined together in matrimony, "I command, yet not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart

not from her husband: but if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband."

Many are the reasons which go to show that this indissolubility of marriage is far less burdensome than it might at first seem: and this can be easily shown from the many and solid benefits to individuals and society arising therefrom. But I must stop here because of the scope of these short discourses.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

MORTAL SIN.

Behold a leper coming adored Him.—Matt. viii; 2-3.

LEPROSY is a type of sin; the leper a type of the sinner. Lepers were not made clean, but were only declared clean by the priests of the Old Law. In the New Law the sinner covered with the leprosy of mortal sin is actually cleansed by the priests of the Church, to whom Christ has given this tremendous power.

Mortal sin, or deadly sin, is called such because it kills the soul, depriving it of the sanctifying grace which unites it with God and constitutes its very life. In this state destitute of God's grace, it is in hostility to Him, it is in spiritual darkness, and under His curse. It is, we may say, in incipient damnation: let but death overtake it in this condition, and its damnation is consummated. It requires a miracle of God's sovereign grace to rescue it from the hell to which it rushes headlong. This grace can alone stand between it and the precipice of eternal misery upon which it stands. And this grace works through a sincere conversion to Almighty God.

The essential malice of Mortal sin consists in this: that it is a rebellion against God's law, an insult offered to His infinite majesty. The creature contemns the Creator, and would fain withdraw

himself from His authority. It is the most inconceivable of all evils: a disorder which contemns the Creator's infinite intelligence and sovereign will, as proclaimed by His laws.

To this inherent malice and foulness of sin is to be added the baseness and nothingness of men: dust and ashes, the slime and worm of the earth, rotting flesh and putrid corruption, raises its impotent and insolent heart in contempt of the Lord who fashioned it into being and breathed into it the breath of life: the vile creature spurns the incomprehensible majesty, disregards the unutterable excellence, and provokes the unfailing justice of its Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor! What mind can conceive or tongue declare the countless and inestimable blessings which in this threefold relation the creature has received from its God!

How blind is the folly, how base the ingratitude, how black the malice of spurning, and breaking away from God—the Supreme good—and, even for a moment, of enslaving one's self to the devil and his most miserable slavery for sake of the baleful pleasure of sin! Such destroy the divine bond of charity which holds them united to God, and sell themselves to the cruel and galling and crushing tyranny which rankles and festers in the souls of those who by sin cast aside their Lord and God, and give themselves over to the enemy of their souls. Eager for the liberty of sin, they forfeit the true freedom of the children of God, and become victims of a bondage the most grievous and intolerable, whose links are forged in hell and can never be dissolved but by the almighty grace of God. Such is the wretched state

of those who can say, "O Lord our God, other lords besides Thee have ruled over us."

If the claims and motives of love deter not the sinner and hold him fast in loyalty to God, let the calamities and miseries into which sin plunges him prevail with him. Sin violates the sanctity of the soul redeemed with the blood of Christ and espoused to Him by His grace and Sacraments in the most intimate and mysterious of unions. This temple of the living God is polluted, and the threat of the Apostle ensues: "Now if any one violate the Temple of God, him will God destroy."

Besides the anger of God which sin and the sinner, by warring with God, provoke, and by which He is grievously offended, according to the Apostle: "Wrath and indignation and tribulation and sorrow to every soul of man that does evil," there is an uncounted plague of evils which sin inflicts upon men. These David sums up in his words: "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thy anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sins." There was no part of him that escaped the infection of sin; for its poison penetrated even his very bones, *i.e.*, had infected his reason and will, the noblest part of his soul. For while the act of sin passes away, the stain and guilt remain, invoking God's anger. "For see," says Jer. ii; 19, "that it is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord thy God, and not to fear me, says the Lord of hosts." They that want the necessary acknowledgment and sense of grief for sin, are said by the prophets to have a hard, stony, and adamant heart, not softened by grief, and without feeling or sense of wholesome confession and forgiveness.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

EXTREME UNCTION.

“ Lord, save us, we perish.”—St. Matt. viii; 25.

THE cry of the Apostles to the Lord when they found themselves on the point of being engulfed in the sea, should be the cry of every one visited with sickness or calamity that threatens death: Save us O Lord or we perish: save us from bodily death if such be thy holy will; or, if we are to die, save us from the worse calamity of eternal death. Our Lord has provided such a preservative of body and soul in the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction. The day on which this Sacrament is to be administered to everyone should be continually before his eyes—a reflection that would be the best corrective of all sin, the best monitor of our life, and the guarantee of eternal salvation. The thought of death is indissolubly linked with this Sacrament: and if in all our works we remember our last end we shall never sin.

At various times it has been designated by various names. It is called Extreme Unction because it is the last of all the Sacraments and unctions which Christ has provided for the different needs of the soul, to be imparted.

It is a true Sacrament: for in it we find the essen-

tial constituents: matter or element which is oil of olives; the word or form, the solemn prayer by which pardon is besought for the sins of the sick man, and the promise of grace; for there must be grace where pardon is pledged. All of which are summed up by St. James, who announces this Sacrament: Is any man sick among you; let him call the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him. Although there are many anointings, because the different senses are treated and prayed for, yet these are but the component parts of one complete act. The oil so soothing to the body is a fit emblem of the consolation which the Sacrament imparts to the soul. This Sacrament, while primarily meant to give grace to the soul, yet secondarily it is designed to give health to the body. "And the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven"; in those words the Apostle declares this twofold end of this holy ordinance. Yet, as this restoration to health may not be conducive to the soul's salvation, or not in accord with the Divine will, the prayer of faith is not made absolutely but conditionally, on the good pleasure of God. Hence the form is not absolute, as in the other Sacraments, but imprecatory or beseeching God's mercy.

Because of this second purpose of the Sacrament, they err lamentably who defer its reception until the sick man is beyond hope, and death imminent. It were even a worse mistake and greater wrong to

the sick, with a view to the fruitful reception of the Sacrament, to delay it until they are unconscious, and, it may be, in the agony of dissolution. The full profit of the Sacrament requires that it be received with sorrow for sin, purpose of amendment, a spirit of faith and trust in God, and other religious dispositions of soul, all of which require clearness of mind and an unimpaired will; they are impossible when the person is delirious with agony. How can anyone senseless or unconscious, and, in a manner, more dead than alive, an inanimate block rather than a living being, elicit and entertain those virtuous thoughts and acts which even in health require no small effort of mind, and tension of will, and wholesome disciplining of the whole being? For all acts of a man imputable or meritorious to him must proceed from a will directed by reason. The external unction cannot profit except in so far as it is made fruitful by the interior disposition.

This Sacrament may be received when one is visited by a sickness that may or often proves fatal, without regard to what may be the result in his particular case. It must be received when death is near at hand. It can be imparted to those only who are in danger of death from sickness, not to those in health even exposed to risk of death from accidents and other causes. Of course after the occurrence of these other causes and the persons are sick from them, the Sacrament should be administered.

It should always be received in a state of grace; for it is a Sacrament not of the dead in sin, but of the living in grace. Yet, when it is impossible to ascertain the spiritual state of the soul or to improve

it, as in the condition of the unconscious, it is lawful to impart the Sacrament in a conditional manner.

The chief benefits of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction are that it blots out venial sin and lesser imperfections; it frees the soul from the languor and weakness of the will to virtue, which results from sin; it frees us also from all other remains of sin. The remembrance of former sins very much increases the fear of death; for when the conscience disturbs we tremble at the near approach of our Judge. This Sacrament consoles us in this perplexity, and fortifies us. It frees the mind from the trouble and apprehension that death brings with it, and fills the soul with a pious and holy joy, disposing us to look tranquilly on death, to cast aside sorrow, and with cheerful resignation to await the Lord's summons. While the enemy of our salvation never ceases "going round seeking whom he may devour," there is no hour in which his fury is more violent and his assaults more furious and his strategies more artful than at the hour of death, when he would take from us all hope of God's mercy and lead to despair. In this peril the holy Sacrament gives us strength to withstand these attacks, and light to escape these artifices, and arms to repress this violence, and hope assured and renewed in the Divine goodness by which we are consoled and strengthened.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOOD AND BAD IN THE CHURCH.

“The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field.”—St. Matt. xiii; 24.

THE constituent parts of the Church of God are the souls that have triumphed in the conflict for salvation in this world, and are now in heaven; the souls that have also secured salvation, but who are not yet acquitted of all the claims of divine justice, and are discharging them in Purgatory; and the souls that are in the estate of the way, struggling for salvation in this world; this is the Church militant.

This Church being made up of human persons, an external organization and visible “like the City on the mountain-top,”—and this from the necessity of its mission—necessarily comprises the good and the bad. It would not be entitled to the name of militant if both the bad and the good were not together in its fold. For it is in the struggle against the flesh, the world and the devil that some are approved as good, and others are condemned as bad.

No one but God can infallibly know who are the good and who are the bad. Men may conjecture or surmise from what seems obvious signs, and may conclude with probability as to who are just and unjust, but as the heart remains hidden but to God,

He alone can unerringly "know who are His own." And it is the heart and what proceeds therefrom that makes the note of difference between them.

The good and the bad in the Church profess the same faith, worship at the same Sacrifice, and have the use of the same Sacraments. It is plain how different may be the interior dispositions with which these acts are performed. And it is the motive which resides in the heart that determines the merit or demerit of every act of virtue and religion.

In addition to the same faith and worship and Sacraments which they profess with the wicked, the just are united to God and one another by the spirit of grace and the bond of charity: free from mortal sin and their souls alive with sanctifying grace. As from their fruits we are to know the true disciples of Christ, the manner of life and actions will usually serve to show of what spirit they are, and to discriminate between the just and the unjust. As evil-doing necessarily marks the wicked, so well-doing and meritorious works are to be sought in the upright and God-loving.

Besides the good and bad in the Church and belonging to her by open profession, if not by inward life and grace, there are those who externally, and even by profession, do not claim her membership, and but profess allegiance to some heretical or schismatical, or even infidel persuasion, who, nevertheless, are said to belong to the Church because of their good faith or honest conviction that their error is truth, or because of invincible ignorance, or prejudice transmitted with the blood, the result of no fault on their part, and which it is not in their power

by any effort to remove, or eradicate. These are said by theologians to belong to the soul of the Church because in intention they wish to know the truth, and because of other excellent dispositions which may be theirs, they may be united to the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church. While they are the victims of an erring conscience which they are bound to follow, they can be partakers of the grace of God: for the spirit of God breathes where He will. All that is not according to conscience is sin: wherefore all that is according to conscience is sinless. This faith, however, to avail unto salvation, must be accompanied by freedom from sin, or at least by contrition for past sins.

That the Church is made up not only of the good but of the bad is apparent from the parables illustrative of her which the Gospel makes use of. The kingdom of heaven is like to a draw net, let down into the sea; or to a field, in which tares were oversown; or to a threshing floor, in which is contained the corn with the chaff; or to the ten virgins, of whom some were wise and some foolish. Also in the Ark, in which the clean and unclean living creatures were shut up together, we see a figure of the mixture of the good and bad in the Church.

The bad remain among the good as diseased members sometimes continue on the body, or as chaff with the corn, or weeds with flowers. They are allowed to grow together, lest plucking up one, the other is destroyed. The saint is often the father of the sinner, the sinner the father of the saint. In due season the angels of God will go forth and separate the one from the other.

Those outside the pale of the Church are infidels who were never admitted to her, nor received any of her Sacraments: heretics who have fallen from her by disbelief in one or more of her teachings: schismatics who have contemned the authority of her rulers and sought to rend her government. Those excommunicated from the Church do not cease to belong to her, but are cut off from the communion of the faithful, and deprived of participation of the Sacraments and graces and other spiritual benefits of which she is the custodian, until they repent, and seek and obtain reconciliation and restoration with her.

No matter, therefore, what may be the character of those baptized, or however exceptionable might be the manner of living of those in authority, they truly belong to the Church, and lose none of their power. For, if Christ meant that we were to obey only the holy when He commanded us to obey the Church, as these are always beyond our knowledge, we could never know whose censure we are to shun, and whose decision to obey. The glaring defects of the Pharisees who sat in the chair of Moses did not lessen the duty which the people owed to them.

All sinners and saints are therefore in the Church until the day when the Lord shall separate the sheep from the goats.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

FAITH.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.”—St. Matt. xiii; 32.

WHEN with Divine faith we believe any truth revealed by Almighty God, we do not merely think or suppose or opine that it is true, but with the firmest and surest of all possible assents of which the mind is capable, we accept of the word of God revealing it. In such a conviction or persuasion there cannot be aught of doubt or wavering. Although those things which Faith presents are not in themselves evident or intelligible to us, as other truths on a level with the human mind, yet they are none the less certain, but infinitely more so. For we may easily be mistaken when we are guided merely by the light of evidence, but we cannot possibly be mistaken when we are taught by the unerring word of the living God—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Even human knowledge, which results from our understanding or from what seems to us evidence, is not necessarily the surest and least unerring; frequently and even generally that which we get from others more skilled or more learned in the matter is incom-

parably truer and more reliable. The light of the mind is darkness to the light of God which grace sheds in the hearts of those who believe.

He who has this true Faith can have no desire, nor could he regard it as any relief to his mind to comprehend or know how the mystery or truth proposed to his belief is true, or to desire more certain evidence. For whatever its difficulties may be, or the doubts unanswerable which it seems to invite, he knows that nothing can tell against the truth of God, and that all difficulties and doubts fade in the light of His omniscience. It is obvious that it is not for man to scrutinize or explore the hidden nature of what God calls upon him to believe, not to comprehend. It is patent that we can believe with a most unflinching assent that there are three Persons in God without knowing how these Divine persons subsist. So with other revealed truths. "God is true and every man a liar," says the Apostle. What rashness and arrogance, then, must it not be for anyone before accepting revealed truths, or after he has accepted them, to demand the right to understand what depends upon the very word of God, especially as no one would think of doubting, or mistrusting a truthful man affirming what he knows to be true. If the truths and mysteries disclosed by God were to be comprehended by us, there would be no need of receiving them on Faith, and they would cease to be mysterious.

There are some truths disclosed by Divine revelation which reason, absolutely speaking, is capable of learning and understanding. But it is after long and laborious study and investigation for which

ability and learning and time and freedom from distracting cares of life are indispensable. Even truths of the natural order which are preliminary to revelation, and which are quite on a level with reason, require steadiness of thought, penetration of mind, and sustained mental labor, to reach abiding convictions and such as may influence the life and mould the character. For these truths, and particularly for the former, the shortest, surest, most effectual and comprehensive way to make them known to the great bulk of mankind is the authority of Faith. For men in general have not the talents, and, preoccupied with the affairs of life and the incessant struggle to support themselves and those entrusted to them, still less the time and leisure and inclination necessary for studies that must, for most men, ever be so abstract in character and so far removed from the sphere of their life and labors and mental pursuits.

There are still other truths and mysteries so lofty and transcendent in character and so impervious to human scrutiny, so utterly beyond the reach of human comprehension, or of any finite intelligence, that we could have never known or imagined them unless the great God had in His condescension revealed them. Such, among other adorable mysteries, are those of the Trinity, or Three Persons subsisting in One God, and the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. Nothing short of the Divine manifestation could have ever disclosed to the lowly children of men—creatures extracted from the earth and phantoms of an hour—and nothing than the sovereign grace and supernal light of the same Godhead could have induced these same creatures to

accept with docile hearts, and to prostrate their minds in belief and adoration of those incomprehensible and immortal truths. And yet these truths, apparently removed from and too lofty for man, are nevertheless indissolubly bound up with his welfare in this life, and his eternal happiness hereafter.

The objects of Faith are to be not only believed in the heart, but to be professed by the mouth: the interior assent of the soul is to be an open profession. With the greatest eagerness should men confess Jesus Christ before the world that He may confess them before His Father in heaven. This is obligatory at the suitable occasions. But never can He be denied before men without the penalty of being denied hereafter before His Father. "For, with the heart, we believe unto justice: but with the mouth confession is made to salvation," says the Apostle. And the sentiment of the same Apostle ought to be uppermost in the mind of every believer: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes." If we really believe, we cannot fail to speak: for "out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaketh."

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

TRUE HAPPINESS.

“ But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received each one a shilling.”—Matt. xx; 10.

MATERIAL pleasure cannot satisfy the heart of man. Revelation was not necessary to teach this truth. Pagan philosophy, the human conscience, and universal experience of men, have concurred in teaching that the human soul was made for something higher than sensible gratification. Pleasure unmixed with pain and lasting forever can only satisfy the cravings of man's nature. A life in which a loose is given to passion and pleasure is one of untold misery and unceasing keen remorse. Its pain and distress is beyond measure greater than the gratification already passed, and forgotten except in its bitter memory. True bliss and tranquillity are not found in the ways of immorality nor in the breasts of the vicious. The path of virtue alone leads to the home of bliss. Nature has not mixed remorse, and bitterness, and disappointment and distress with what she destined to be man's true happiness. His true end will ennoble and elevate him; not debase him to the condition of the brute. His incomparable excellence over all other creatures requires that his destiny be superior to theirs—that

in it his intellect and will be perfected and elevated, not degraded and destroyed. His transcendent endowments, evincing his preeminence and superiority, call for a commensurate destiny. Who has ever seen a painter or sculptor reserve his masterpiece to some ignoble purpose? The Divine Architect has not consigned the noblest works of His hands to the degradation of finding happiness in sensible gratification, and to a state more wretched than that of the beasts that lie prone upon the earth.

The riches, honors, glories of the world are not attainable by all, nor by any without anxiety, chagrin, and uncertainty; nor retained without unceasing dread of losing them. These vanities cannot satisfy the heart of man. Those who possess them confess that they are far from true happiness or complete satisfaction. So far from these things rendering them happy, they deprive them of true content to be found in that middle state between poverty and riches, honor and respectability, glory and obscurity.

Calamity may at any moment fall upon the possessors of these goods, robbing them of wealth, stripping them of their honors, overwhelming them in despair and misery. And this fear can never be absent from their minds. Assured, if it were possible, against such calamity, can they be secured against the certainty of death at any moment, which necessarily haunts them—death which, whether sudden or looked for, whether soon or late, it is not in their power to retard or avert?

Poverty, humiliation, obscurity do not satisfy the heart of man. No one can be happy with destitu-

tion staring him in the face, or only able to avert it with the sweat of his brow. No one but chafes under humiliation and not cheered by the hope of recognition. Yet this is the condition of the bulk of mankind. But most men cannot be excluded from what is their final destiny. Therefore these objects cannot be man's real happiness. The desire of happiness belongs to all men. This is the principal tendency of his nature. It could not have been implanted in the heart if it were not to be satisfied. Men must have a common 'end. And this end is the possession of God.

If I were to ask you what is nearest and dearest to your hearts, you would with one accord from the depths of your soul answer that you seek for nothing but happiness. The soul instinctively seeks to be happy; this desire is infused into it the moment of its creation; hence it is essential to it. It is the supreme tendency of man's rational nature, which indicates and leads him to his destiny in God. While the soul endures, it endures and can be satisfied with nothing short of the eternal bliss to be found in God only. Man's supreme tendency must be to his final destiny. This the wisdom and goodness of God requires. The happiness which the soul craves includes every good, excludes every evil, and lasts forever. Any happiness short of this is inadequate to the full contentment and supreme bliss of the soul. Such cannot be found except in God: such is God. Wherefore the soul is made for God, He is its final beatitude.

The felicity which the soul seeks and which alone can satisfy it, must be, like itself, spiritual; no

sensible delight, even the purest and loftiest, can meet the exigencies of a spiritual being. Spirit and matter being essentially different, each must find its bliss in objects essentially different, in objects proportioned or kindred to its capacity and inherent inclination. This truth so obvious to even casual reflection all human experience, individual and collective, confirms. Disregard or forgetfulness in life and practice of what reason so clearly teaches is the source of all the misery and pain of men; for nothing but sin and evil can result from so great blindness and consequent disorder; and if there be found among them aught of bliss and contentment it is because there are some who are not blind to so clear a truth, and refuse to condemn it.

Every being that God has made He has endowed with a virtue and aptitude suitable to its nature to attain the purpose which He has assigned it. The eye is made to see, and rejoices in the act of seeing; the mind finds its bliss in knowledge, as its natural purpose; the heart is made to love and is only at rest in its love. Our will seeks what seems to it its good, as the intellect and every faculty seeks its proper good and object. The possession of its good is the bliss of every faculty. But good results from beauty, harmony, order. Hence the human soul desires these objects without limit. God alone is all order, all beauty, all harmony, all good. All created beauty, order, harmony, good, is but a feeble reflex of their uncreated prototype, and is necessarily limited. Whence it follows that nothing created can satisfy the human soul, nor should engross all our love,—that in God and in Him alone

can man find perfect happiness, and should possess all our love beyond all things. This is why men are unhappy: because they seek happiness where it is not to be found. This is why the good and God-loving are comparatively happy: because living for Him and keeping His law, they attain as much happiness as is possible here below.

SEXAGESIMA.

THE WORD OF GOD.

The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air ate it up.—St. Luke viii; 5.

THIS parable illustrates for all time the course and destiny of the preaching of the Word of God among men: how to those who hear it with a perfect and docile heart it becomes the instrument of their salvation: how to those who hear without the proper dispositions, it is of no profit and may even become a means of their perdition; for light and grace abused imperil salvation, as it renders conversion impossible if persisted in. The parable also shows how little of the success of preaching is to be credited to the manner in which it is announced; how it all depends upon the dispositions of the hearers. The seed planted by one ignorant of agriculture will grow, if the ground be ploughed and harrowed, nurtured and fertilized that it may with genial embrace receive the seed. So with the seed of the Word of God. The hearts of those who are to profit by it must be prepared to receive it as the Word of God and with an earnest purpose of applying it to themselves. Otherwise they cannot expect

the grace of God which must needs go with it, and without which all preaching is vain. For "though Paul may plant, and Apollo water, it is God Himself who gives the increase." Unless the grace of God is felt and His voice heard in the conscience, when the preacher's word is heard in the ear, he is become as a "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal"; and the hearers become as those that "hear, and hear not, as those that see, and see not." For salutary hearing and seeing must reach the heart, and co-operate with the divine grace which attends the message of God to the sinner through the mouth of His preacher. "To-day if you hear the voice of God, harden not your heart; as in the Provocation, and as in the day of Temptation in the wilderness."

The Word of God is the food of the soul. It is always an ominous sign when men have not a hunger for this food. As loss of appetite for corporal food, or difficulty of retaining it portends sinking health, or even death near at hand, so, likewise, they who have no hunger, but rather a disgust for God's Word, or who are easily surfeited with it are in deadly peril of not being in the way of salvation. For we cannot hope well of those who in their deeds utter that impious cry against God, narrated by Job, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (xxi; 14). When God, provoked by their sins, deprives men of this saving hunger for the divine Word, He is said to send a famine among men: "I will send a famine upon the earth, not a famine of bread, or a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord" (Amos viii; 11).

Our Lord Himself explains the parable. From this explanation every one can see for which of the causes given, the Word of God fails to produce its rightful fruit in his soul; and if it does produce its due fruit, the reason of it.

The seed that fell by the wayside are they who hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the Word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. No wonder such seed was trodden down and the birds ate it up. For the wayside, hardened and stony for the purpose of and from the use of walking, is no place for planting seed. So the hardened and stony heart can afford but scant lodgment to the word of the preacher. It is not prepared by fervent prayer, and undistracted attention, and a prompt responsiveness to benefit by what they hear. Such hearts are trodden and made hard by the habit of sin; by quenching remorse, and steeling conscience to its reproaches and the influences of grace; and above all by repentance delayed again and again, it may be for years.

The seed that fell upon the rock are they who hearing, are not unwilling, but rather acceptably hear the Word. But they are surface souls; they are fickle; they believe for a while; they would wish rather than positively wish, or, still less, will. While they profess to intend, they take not the means necessary to carry out their intentions. In a little while, they listen to the siren voice of pleasure and sin with even more interest than they gave to their good resolutions. Constant it may be in all things else, they are not constant in good and in "the one thing needful." Temptation is too much for their

weak resolves. They have not the stamina which constitutes God's elect. They have no root in faith and virtue.

The seed which fell among the thorns and was choked by them, are they who when they have heard and got the Word of God, allow it to be choked with the cares and anxieties of life—always wearing upon the mind and incessant in their exactions—with the mad pursuit of riches and greed for what the eye sees; with the delusion and soul-destroying pleasures of the senses; always forgetting that the eye is not filled with seeing, or the ear with hearing, or the heart with loving, or the senses with gratification. The heart is distracted, and the spirits wasted with this multitude of unsatisfactory and disappointing objects.

The seed that fell upon the good ground are they who hear the Word with a docile heart and willing mind, keep it in the soul, are faithful to the light and grace that it brings with it, and with patience under trial, and long suffering with sin, and trust in God, bring forth fruit unto salvation an hundred-fold, nay, many hundred-fold. “He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” May this be your grace and reward.

QUINQUAGESIMA.

THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

“For He will be delivered up to the Gentiles, and mocked, and scourged, and spit upon. And after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death, and the third day He will rise again.”—St. Luke xviii; 32-33.

WHO is it that suffers all these things? The heart cannot conceive, nor words declare the dignity of the Sufferer. For it is the Eternal Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, made man: the Figure of His Father's substance and the splendor of His glory: “By Whom have been made all things that have been made; and Who sustains them by the word of His power.” It is Jesus Christ, God and man, Who suffers: the Creator suffers for the creature.

Considering Who it is that suffers, we cannot marvel that “the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, the sun was darkened, the dead arose, and that darkness covered the earth.” If insensible nature, the very stones of God's handiwork, gave signs of their consternation, how should men—the living stones of His creation—be moved, and manifest their feelings?

Why did He suffer? Because of the sin of our first parents, which has flowed a contagion to all

their posterity, and because of the vices and sins which men have actually committed from the beginning till now, and which they will commit till the end of time;—to make expiation for all this vast deluge of sin, and to make satisfaction to His Father for it, did Jesus Christ come into the world, suffer, and die.

What does He suffer? The bitterness of His passion and death was so great that nothing could be added to it. In the garden of Gethsemane the night before He was crucified His agony of mind was so great at the sacrifice He was about to make, and the malice of men that would render it of so little avail, and the load of their sins which He bore was so crushing, that the blood issued from the pores of His body and trickled down to the earth: if the anticipation of His sacrifice was so intense, what was not the sacrifice itself, when, putting aside the support of His divinity, He abandoned Himself to that desolation of spirit which in Him was a compensation for the pains of hell in man, to that dereliction by the Father: My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?—which proclaimed the depth and reality of His sufferings, and that He was the real Victim upon Whom God had placed the iniquities of us all: “Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up to death for us.” No sufferings could surpass these.

For whom does He suffer? I have said, for all the generations of men, and for every man in particular: as much for each as for all. Because He suffered for all did not diminish the amount He suffered for each: because He suffered for each did

not lessen the amount He suffered for all. He suffered for even the authors and executioners of His own passion and death: He even prayed especially for them: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." For every sinner did He suffer: that is, for every child of Adam, for we are all sinners, and that not only in our birth, but by our own actions. He who claims to be without sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him, says the Apostle. It was our sins, and not the Jews, which drove Him on the cross, and involved the anger of the Father upon Him as the self-offered victim for sins. And it is they who easily and often fall into sin, who persist in sin, and backslide into sin, who think little of sin, who play with and court sin, and expose themselves to sin—it is they who as far as in them lies re-crucify the Son of God, and make a mockery of His passion and death: "who crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame," according to the Apostle.

They who are thus guilty are even worse than the Jews. For the Apostle bears them witness, that "if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." But we do know Him and believe Him to have been the Lord of glory: the Incarnate Word, Who died for us and our salvation. And we condemn the Jews who put Him to death; and are scandalized that they could have imprecated His blood upon themselves and their children. While we obstinately persist in shutting our eyes to the truth that our sins were the real cause of His death, and the Jews only the providential instruments for their atonement, we continue to renew that

cause, and to render ourselves guilty, again and again, and maybe a thousand times, of His blood; thereby summoning upon ourselves far more truly than did the Jews, and rendering it more likely, as more deserved, to fall upon us than upon them, the curse of His blood sacrilegiously shed; which can but ensure our eternal condemnation. Thus, while professing to know and serve Him, in our deeds and manner of life we seem to lay violent hands upon Him.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE.

“And when ye fast, be not of a sad countenance, as the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces, that to men they may appear to fast. Truly I say to you, they have got their reward.”—St. Matt. vi; 16.

TRUE Penance is not the displeasure which, owing to change of mind, is felt for things which formerly pleased, regardless of whether they are good or bad. True Penance is not the grief which one has for sin committed which before delighted him, and which grief is not for God's sake but his own. True Penance is when, inwardly and outwardly, by sense of the soul and by external sign, we grieve for sin and when this grief is for God's sake only.

This virtue of true Penance is the groundwork and matter of the Sacrament of Penance. To understand the nature of the Sacrament we must first understand the virtue of repentance. The first is of no avail without the second. The outward act without the inward spirit is fruitless or feigned; repentance without grief of the soul is even deception. In faith in God, and hope in His mercy, we must from our very soul hate and detest our sins and turn to God, and steadfastly resolve to shun them and amend our lives.

Most men grieve too little for their sins; some men grieve not at all; many men grieve but not with the true repentance which I have described; for they deceive themselves with a fictitious or sorrow merely human; some few men grieve overmuch—and are incapacitated for salutary repentance and its fruits; or, it may be, give way to despair, as Cain, who felt his sin too great to be forgiven, or Judas, who perished by his own hand, and for this alone would have lost his soul.

The virtue of Penance enables us to keep our sorrow in true measure and degree, and leads it to bring forth fruits worthy of divine repentance.

He who has this virtue purposes to destroy sin as far as in him lies, and to wash his soul from every guilt and blemish. He proposes to satisfy the justice of God for his sins, if you can speak of justice between the Creator and His creature, or not rather the relation which subsists between a master and his servants, or God and the work of His hands. He must be restored to the grace of God which he has forfeited by incurring God's hatred by his sins. All these excellent motives evince that Penance is a virtue, and a virtue which leads to reconciliation with God.

Listen to the steps by which we mount to this divine virtue.

The work begins with God. His mercy precedes and converts our hearts to Him. "Convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted," exclaimed the prophet. Enlightened by this light we tend to God by faith. For "he that comes to God," as the Apostle declares, "must believe that He is, and that

He is a rewarder of them that seek Him." Then comes a sense of fear, and the soul contemplating the bitter punishments that await sin is recalled therefrom. "As a woman with child, when she draws near to her travail, is in pain and crieth out in her pangs, so are we become in Thy presence, O Lord." To this is added hope of obtaining mercy from God, and encouraged by this hope, we resolve to amend our life and morals. Lastly, our hearts are kindled with charity whence arises the filial fear of honest and ingenuous children towards parents. Thus fearing to offend in any way the majesty of God, we wholly forsake the ways of sin.

By these different steps we reach the virtue of Penance; a virtue to which the kingdom of heaven is promised, and a virtue by which alone must be saved all who are to be saved, with the exception of the very few who may not have lost their baptismal innocence. "I will not," said the Lord, "the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live." "Do penance, or ye shall all likewise perish," exclaimed the Baptist preparing the way for the first coming of the Judge of the living and the dead.

The virtue of Penance necessarily calls for satisfaction; this is that amends or compensation which the sinner renders to God for sins committed. Jesus Christ being "the propitiative for our sins, and for those of the whole world," is the most adequate and abundant satisfaction even according to the utmost demands of the most rigid justice, and of the infinite malice of sin, and of the boundless majesty of God, and of the unutterable baseness of man. No created sacrifice could pay the debt we owed to

God's justice for our sins. By this all-sufficient Sacrifice men's actions acquire merit before God; without it, they could avail nothing to eternal life. This is the only Atonement satisfactory to God, commensurate with sin, and which men may truly claim as their own because of Christ's human nature. This truly is the chalice of salvation, and with it we can in all confidence call upon the name of the Lord.

The first element of satisfaction to be paid to God's violated honor is the fixed resolve by all means to shun sin; hence to cut away with an unsparing hand the causes and occasions of sin, and to close our hearts to its very first suggestion.

Even after the remission of sin and the eternal punishment which goes with it, there yet remain in the soul stains or relics of sin and arrears of due temporal punishment. For scars remain even when the wounds are healed; and forgiveness may be accompanied with the infliction of some pain as corrective of the evil and as warning for the future, lest we think sins lighter than they are because forgiven. David after his sin was blotted out, yet prayed the Lord, "Wash me yet more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin; because I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me." In these words he day and night besought the Lord with tears that he would purge him from the remains of the sin already blotted out, and from the temporal punishment yet due, and give him back his former integrity and virtue. Thus he studied to render his penance as exemplary to men and acceptable to God, as his sin had been scandalous and

worthy of divine chastisement. Royal in his character, he was even more royal in his sincere repentance.

Any kind of suffering which we of our accord fully undergo or put upon ourselves for our sins is truly satisfactory and pleasing to God. By these acts we propitiate God's justice and turn away the chastisements prepared for us; for God accepts our self-imposed works in their stead; "for if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged." Our works, of course, can be pleasing to God and satisfying to His justice only through the merits of the Passion of Christ our Lord; given in Whose name a cup of cold water shall not go unrewarded, and through Whom alone we can merit eternal glory. By our satisfactions made acceptable to God, Christ conveys to us not only what He merited in His passion, but what He merited and performed in the saints and just; for unto them as members of His body, and as the vine to the branches, and as joined to Him in charity, Christ continually pours His graces. This grace goes before, attends, follows our works; without it we never either merit, or satisfy God. Because of this union with Christ and the inflowing of His grace the works of men have their only value and excellence.

Satisfaction for sin to be acceptable to God must be performed by one already justified and in friendship with God. For works not animated by faith and charity are dead in His sight and find no favor or acceptance with Him.

As acts of satisfaction are to make amends for past sins, it is obvious that, as pain is the price of

evil pleasure, of their nature they should be painful and such as will cause suffering and grief, although this may not be always felt. For the ardor of charity or the continual endurance of such mortification may serve much to lessen or even entirely deaden the sense of suffering. This, however, does not diminish their satisfying efficacy or power; for it is the result of love and devotion towards God, and steady self-sacrifice in virtue.

Every kind of satisfaction naturally takes the forms mainly of prayer, fasting, and alms. And these are the three best safeguards of the soul, the best defenses against sin, the best restraints of passion, the best bars against undue attachment to worldly goods. Than these virtues nothing can be more potent to eradicate or subdue sinful propensities and to compensate Divine justice. Prayer strengthens the soul by uniting it to God; fasting bridles passion by mortifying the body; almsgiving and generous beneficence detaches from worldly mammon and avarice. They are so many antidotes or medicines for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, the three fruitful sources of all moral disorder and human misery. Besides, by prayer we appease God whom by sin we have offended; by almsgiving we satisfy our neighbor whom by injustice we have wronged; we chastise ourselves by fasting, and bring the body, which wars against the spirit, into abiding subjection.

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT.

ON TEMPTATION.

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.”—St. Matt. iv; 1.

“Pray that we enter not into temptation.”—St. John xiii; 10.

THERE are many who, because they seem not to feel the devil tempting them, are somewhat incredulous and may even smile when the subject is broached. Why should the devil waste his artifices upon them, or why should they sensibly feel his assaults, when they have freely given themselves to him, and have long since become his prey and servants? He has no reason to waste his efforts upon his own: they are his by right of war and capture, although they may not realize it. These people have no piety, or charity, or Christian virtue; at most, a dead faith which seems for naught but to render their guilt deeper, as knowing what they should do and yet failing to do it. They sin with impunity, even as freely as they breathe; they make no account of God's laws when it serves their interests or passions to transgress them. Conscience to them is no restraint; God's grace and inspirations are choked and steeled in their hearts. There truly is no temptation in the soul where the devil rules and runs riot and has everything his own way.

It is when you give yourself to God you are to experience temptation: "Son, when you enter the service of God prepare your soul for temptation." For the devil will not willingly relinquish his grasp: before that he will level all his engines of destruction. Those who have devoted themselves to God, seeking to lead an heavenly life on earth, he bitterly hates, and tries to destroy by his attacks, or entangle by his snares, or seduce by his allurements. Behold Adam, David, Solomon, and the countless examples of men of high renown, blameless lives, heroic virtues, who in an evil hour have fallen before his power or been inveigled in his stratagems. He tempted the Son of God Himself, as we read in our Gospel. This was allowed for our instruction, and to teach us the necessity of guarding against his temptations, and of anxiously shunning all occasions of sin. "For God tempts no man," says St. James. "Nor will He ever suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able; but will even make with temptation an issue, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10). Human strength is no match for the power of the devil, nor human wisdom to detect his artifices: we need the light and grace of God. Hence we pray that we be not led into temptation; hence we must be on the alert to fly from all occasions of sin in which always the devil lies hidden and in wait.

We err if we imagine that we are not tempted by the devil except when he appears in proper form and visibly to our eyes. This he seldom if ever does. For he is not the imbecile soldier who will frustrate his own work. If he were seen he would

be hated and avoided, and his plans would never prosper; he would be hoisted on his own petard. If he appeared it would be as an angel of light; for thus he could deceive and seduce. He tempted our first parents disguised as a serpent. His arms are our own lusts, the occasions of sin, the pleasures and fascinations of the world; and whatsoever they may be, and howsoever in themselves guilty, always bearing, at least at first, the semblance or visage of innocence and harmlessness. Over depths of malice and gulfs of ruin there is thrown a thin disguise of sinlessness or virtue and safety. He never appears before his guns; but like the modern strategist he stands behind them well out of way and sight, and with an intelligence gained in uncounted conflicts, and with a deadly will blackened and hardened with the conquests of uncounted souls, he levels his engines of hell and havoc at the souls of men, which still he claims as his, notwithstanding his being cast out by the blood of the Incarnate Word.

They err fatally who, relying on their own strength, neglect to pray against temptation and guard themselves against, or, it may be, expose themselves to it, and who affect to despise the artifices and assaults of the evil one. For, truly, they wage an unceasing war against us, out of a hatred at once deadly and boundless. "Your adversary the devil," says the Apostle, "goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Envy of man and hatred of God are the motives of his malignity. The angel of light whom Jesus saw falling from heaven, because of his pride has been changed into an angel of darkness and despair. His boldness is declared in his

own words: "I will climb up even to heaven." He set upon our first parents; he resisted the prophets; he assailed the Apostles; nor was he abashed at the person of Christ Whom, in our Gospel, he had the hardihood to tempt when he was hungry. Nor is he alone; for his "name is legion." "He took with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwelt there. And the last state of that man was worse than the first. He wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of this world of darkness, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things" (Eph. vi; 22).

And what is our weakness? "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak"—so weak indeed that we could not resist of ourselves the assaults of the tempter, were we not succored by God's grace and upheld by His own right hand. Who should have been more intrepid to withstand even the face of the evil one than the Apostles? Yet, on the first approach of danger, they fled disgracefully. Who had more love and faith in Christ than Peter?—who declared that if all should betray Him, and though he were to die with Him, yet he would never deny Him? I need not again recur to those holy men who grievously sinned, because they trusted in themselves: but what must be the fate of those far inferior to them in holiness and grace who confide in their strength, expose themselves wantonly to temptation, and condemn what should be the Christian's continual supplication—not to be led into temptation?

Not alone in this prayer. Among the last words

which Christ addressed to His Apostles, after telling them that they were clean, yet not all, referring to Judas: "Pray ye that ye enter not into temptation." Far better for men "not to have known the way of justice, than after having known it, to turn back again from that holy commandment which was delivered for them" (II Peter 11; 21).

Temptations are advantageous, but never to those who seek them, or expose themselves to them: "Blessed is the man that endures temptation, because when he shall have been tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which God has promised to them that love Him" (James i; 12).

Our continual prayer should be that, upheld by God's grace, we yield not to temptation, nor be deceived by the devil; or, when we are afflicted, that we may always have the assurance of God's grace being always with us, which may strengthen our failing strength and comfort us in affliction. Prayer, therefore, is our refuge and support in all the trials that God permits, as the school of our virtue, and the purifying of our conscience, and the sanctifying of our soul. God overrules all the temptations of the evil one. He cannot go beyond what God allows. He cannot go to the extent in length and degree that his own malice would wish. He could not so much as invade the swine without the Lord's leave. Behold the extent and limit of power given by God to Satan to tempt Job: "Behold, all that he has is in thy hand: only put not forth thy hand upon his person." "Begone Satan! it is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And the devil left Him."

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT.

LIFE EVERLASTING.

“ And Peter answered and said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tents, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”—St. Matt. xvii; 4. •

To those who are absorbed in the things of this life and who place their whole time and pleasure in them, it sometimes seems hard to comprehend how they could be contented with the bliss of heaven: they would be better pleased with an indefinite prolongation of their sensible and sensual life in this world.

The words of the Apostle, “ Lord, it is good for us to be here,” spoken by him in the ecstasy of delight inspired by the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Thabor when the glory of His Divinity shone about Him, illustrates how the vision of the Godhead will fill the soul to repletion with bliss and pleasure, expelling therefrom every other thought or wish.

While the life of the damned is everlasting, yet the word Everlasting life is used to designate the immortal bliss which will be the reward of the just. It will result from the union of the soul with God; and will last forever. None but infinite and unending bliss can satisfy the soul: but there is no infinite pleasure outside of God; and none but what is in-

finite can be everlasting. For happiness that can be lost, or cease to be, cannot be perfect.

They err egregiously, and fatally for themselves, who think that true happiness can be found in this life. For, besides what we have said, reason and the universal experience of men teach the contrary. Our souls, spiritual in nature and consequently in what they aspire to for their happiness, cannot be satisfied with gross, material pleasure such as worldly objects afford. No one has ever lived who confessed that his heart was satisfied with aught to be found here below. On the contrary, all that have placed their happiness in this world or in the things thereof have been bitterly disappointed, and died confessing their error, and that all was vanity and vexation of spirit but God and His love and service. "Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," says St. John. "The world passes away and the concupiscence thereof." We are happy in "hope," according to the Apostle, "if denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we live soberly, justly, and godly in this world, waiting for that blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

How great are the inducements afforded by this promise of everlasting life, to piety, justice, charity, and all other Christian virtues! No mind can conceive, no words can declare such bliss. We cannot realize what we utter when we speak of Everlasting life. Truly, it had not entered the heart of man the rewards that God has in store for those who love Him and serve Him.

There is nothing that we love more than our life; it is esteemed among the first of goods and blessings. Now, if there be nothing dearer to us, or to which we cling with a more undying tenacity, than this frail and brief span of time, so filled, from its start to its finish, with so many and so great and unceasing miseries that it may be more truly a death than a life—at once a living death and a dying life—with what longing earnestness and unwearied solicitude should we not seek, and ply ourselves to obtain, that Everlasting life which is freed from all evils, supplied with all goods, and possessed of that element essential to all true bliss: unending duration? Freedom from all evil, possession of all good, lasting forever, the very definition of the true bliss for which we have been created, and without which we must remain forever miserable. The glory of the blessed will be boundless, the joys and pleasures will be numberless. Glory so great and overwhelming our minds cannot comprehend: our souls must enter into it and be satiated with it to know or realize it.

The essential bliss of the soul is found in the Vision of God and in the contemplation of His goodness and perfection; for He is the source and principle of all that man or angel or any being can know or crave. His perfection is illimitable by His very nature as a self-existing Being; nor can the omnipotent and only God be restricted by anything external to Himself, for all such owe existence to Him. He is the unbounded and boundless ocean of all actual and possible perfection. "This is life eternal," says Christ Jesus, "to know Thee the only

true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.” “Behold now we are the sons of God: but it does not yet appear what we shall be, because we know, when He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is,” says St. John. That is, we shall behold God as He is in His own nature, and we ourselves shall be made as gods.

The blessed, by being made partakers of the Divine Nature, shall enjoy true and solid bliss in beholding God ever present. Though they will retain their own proper substance, they will put on an almost divine form, seeming to be rather gods than men; “Ye shall be as gods.” “We now see as through a glass, darkly, but then, face to face.”

For no one can see the Divine Nature and Being unless God join it with Himself. We come to a knowledge of things through resemblances. But there is nothing like God that can give us a perfect knowledge of Him. Divine things cannot be perceived by resemblances of things created; incorporeal substances cannot be known by corporeal; resemblances must be more spiritual than that which they resemble. No created being, no matter born pure or spiritual, can fully resemble God; the Divine Essence cannot be perfectly understood by any resemblance. Besides, all created things are limited in perfection; whence no created resemblance, or the resemblance of nothing created, can reach the infinite immensity of the God-head. Wherefore we can know God only by being joined with Him by Him; and by some way past our knowledge, but known to Him, so elevate our understanding as to contemplate the perfection of His nature. This is

the light of glory with which we shall be illustrated, when with its splendor we shall see God, Who is the true light, by His own light. As a cloud suffused with the light of the sun becomes all luminous, as iron made red hot by fire does not cease to be iron, yet the new substance of fire is added; so, likewise, the blessed admitted to the glory of heaven are so inflamed and wrought upon with the love of God, that while not ceasing to be what they are, yet are truly more different from those yet in this life than red-hot from ice-cold iron.

This is the glory of heaven: the presence of God; it is His splendor that irradiates it, and fills the blessed with joy and bliss. The prophet with the vision of Heaven's glory before His eyes, exulting with the desire of coming thereto, exclaimed: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh have greatly rejoiced in the living God." This should be the heartfelt desire of all; for Jesus Christ has purchased it for all men by His sufferings and blood—the price of our salvation.

Yet the mere desire will not suffice: the end sought necessarily implies the means employed; for not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter Heaven. A life of faith, and charity, and persevering prayer, due use of the Sacraments, faithful observance of God's Commandments, duties of charity towards our neighbor, should be the zealous study and daily labor of all who would one day possess this happiness prepared for the elect.

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

“ This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.”—St. Matt. xvii; 5.

WITH the same faith with which we believe that Christ is the only Son of God, are we to believe that He is not His adopted, but His natural Son. For the man Christ is not an external person freely elected, and adopted, and assumed into Divine Sonship: but the true and proper Son of God, by nature and eternal generation, not by will and election, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. He is the only true and proper Son of God, subsisting in each nature. “ He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High.” The angel does not say, He shall be called (that is, shall be) the adopted Son of God, but absolutely the Son of God. Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,” said St. Peter. “ Who did not spare His own Son, but for us all delivered Him up,” says St. Paul.

This essential point of our holy Faith is explicitly taught in unmistakable passages of Holy Scripture, and profusely inculcated in the writings of the Fathers, and in decrees of the General Councils of the Church. “ I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, Who for us men and for our salvation descended from heaven, be-

came incarnate, and was made man," is the belief which the Church of Christ professes, as expressed by the Councils of Nice and Constantinople; and as held by the Universal Church throughout the world at all times. Christ as man is the Son of God: not by the grace of adoption, but by His oneness with the God-head: for without the Divine Person the humanity of Christ never did subsist; the oneness of the Person proclaims the Sonship of the man Christ with the Deity.

As the co-eternal and consubstantial and only begotten Son of God, Christ has no brethren, He is alone: but as born in time of a Virgin, He has many brethren: for through Him we have received from the eternal Father the grace of adoption as sons; wherefore we are His brothers in the flesh. "But to as many as received Him, He hath given power to become sons of God, to those who believe in His name."

We are the inheritance of Christ: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee: ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations as Thy inheritance." Christ is our inheritance: He is our light, and grace, and salvation; He hath given us power to be made the sons of God; it is by His grace that we have received this divine adoption. By grace we are made one with Christ: "For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

The Transfiguration of Christ affords a most luminous proof of His divinity.

That it was a miracle, or the cessation of a miraculous state, which cessation was itself miraculous, is obvious. The glory with which on this occasion He was made refulgent was the glory of the God-head, which was His, and which was poured forth from His soul to His body. For we cannot think that it was any created glory which Christ summoned into being for His purpose. Even this would have called for the creative power of God, and would have been no less miraculous, and proved Him God.

The union of the Divine and Human natures in Jesus Christ would naturally cause the glory and splendor of Divinity to be shed upon His body. It was necessary, however, for His divine purpose that this effulgence, during life, should be withdrawn or suspended. For men would never have crucified Him Who was visibly God. Hence the counsel of God for men's salvation would have been frustrated. If Christ did not seem a man like other men, subject to all human weaknesses, the humility of the God-man could never have undone the work of human pride, and the ignominy of the cross could never have become the potent instrument of salvation.

His Transfiguration was but an emitted ray of the glory which was ever with Him but concealed, to give the Apostles overwhelming proof of His divinity, now that He foretells His "delivery into the hands of men, and His death"—what to human eyes might seem weakness and shame, but which to Himself was power and glory. Not, therefore, so much a miracle as the cessation of a miracle, was

this glorious Transfiguration. And this cessation was the result of His love and condescension to His Apostles, and through them to all men who, through their word, have received His doctrine and adored Him as their God and Saviour. And thus they have rendered testimony to Him. The glory of His Transfiguration is a foretaste of the glory and splendor of His second coming: "Ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty."

Truly in this Mystery does the eternal "Father Who sent Him give testimony of Him." Already at His Baptism by John in the Jordan, the voice of the Almighty Father was heard from heaven: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." And later on we shall hear that same voice in answer to Jesus' prayer to be glorified: "I have glorified Thee, and will still glorify Thee." On the present occasion, "Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo! a voice from the cloud saying: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were very much afraid." Mixed awe, amazement and joy filled their souls.

Here, then, is the three-fold acknowledgment of the eternal God of the Divine character of Jesus Christ. Here is the Divine declaration of His divine commission to men, contained in the command, "Here ye Him"; hear Him in what He teaches; hear Him in the authority He claims; hear Him in the commands which He utters; hear Him in the living voice of those whom He will send even as

He Himself is sent, to carry on and to consummate till the end of time the work which He begins; hear Him when He claims "to be in Me, and I in Him," when He claims that "He and the Father are one," when He claims that "he that sees Him sees the Father," that "no one hath seen the Father at any time" except Him, His only begotten Son; hear Him thus declaring Himself consubstantial and co-eternal with Me, God, the omnipotent Creator and Lord of all things, visible and invisible.

By what power less than divine could Jesus Christ have summoned Moses from his tomb, and his soul from Limbo, and Elias from whither he was translated alive, to bear Him witness, and to discourse with on His passion and death then near at hand? Unless He were the God of the living and of the dead He could not have created even a vision of those who were dead thousands of years, and make the Apostles instinctively recognize whom they had never seen, and this, together with all the other incidents and concomitant circumstances of the Transfiguration.

By the presence of Moses, the legate of God, who in His name proclaimed the Law, and of Elias, the most excellent of the prophets, who enforced the Law and was its most strenuous supporter, and by the testimony of the Law itself represented by them, was declared most luminously how truly Christ had spoken when He said, that "He had not come to destroy but to fulfill the law," and that "one jot or tittle of it should not go unfulfilled." Behold Moses before Him, a far greater than himself, Whom he had predicted, Moses, who bore the tables

of the Law from Mount Sinai, and its announcer to men; behold Elias, its propagator, who had pre-announced the Messiah and had been taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot; hear them both attest that Christ is the great Author of the New Law and the Messiah Whom they and all the prophets for ages had foreseen and preannounced.

Neither before nor since John the Baptist, "More than a prophet, and greater than whom has not been born of women,"—the sublime eulogy uttered by Christ—yea, not even the testimony of John was more glorious than that afforded in this Divine assembly of the elect already in glory, and some souls yet living and predestined unto eternal life. For, there was Peter, the head and foundation of the Church of the immortal God, who unenlightened but by the light and grace of the eternal Father, had declared his faith in the Christ, the Son of the living God. There was James, who was the first to endure the sufferings of martyrdom in attestation of his faith in Christ and his teachings, confirmed as they were by the glories of Thabor. Even in his sufferings he must have remembered the manifested glory of Jesus on Thabor, and been consoled and strengthened. There, too, was John, beloved of Christ, who was to lean on His breast at the last supper, and stand by His cross on Calvary, and later on, as the son of thunder, in accents worthy of an archangel, declared His eternal generation and Sonship: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." What a Divine assembly of souls in the presence of the Incarnate Word! And then is

heard in notes of thunder: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him."

No wonder that the disciples, hearing it, "fell on their faces, and were very much afraid." Until then they had been so transported that Peter exclaimed "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tents, one for Thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias." And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead"; lest, as St. Jerome remarks, "the report of His glorious appearance should leave men unprepared for the scandal of the cross. Lest, also, we may add, so glorious a manifestation of His divinity, with the mention as witnesses of names so cherished by the Jews as Moses and Elias might, perchance, finding credence with them, restrain their malicious intentions and tie the hands of those who were to be His murderers. And thus the Divine Sacrifice for the redemption of mankind would not be accomplished, and His mission into the world frustrated.

As to why Our Lord did not allow even a larger number to be present at His Transfiguration, we say, in addition to what has been just remarked, that it ill becomes us to inquire into the inscrutable counsels of God: we must be content with what He has seen fit to ordain, and with the degree of evidence which He has vouchsafed. "The sign from heaven" which the Jews asked for was not granted; for "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given, but the sign of Jonas in the whale's belly." It was not through

ostentation of power, and exhibitions suited to gratify the pride and curiosity of the human heart that God ordained the world's salvation: He would employ humility to undo the work and ruin effected by pride. The testimony of three among the best of the sons of men, sealed with their blood, was enough to insure the belief of the pure of heart and docile of mind looking for and anxious to find the Kingdom of God: for such, with divine grace working out the mysteries of predestination, proof more than sufficient was afforded.

And this has been the order of His providence in all that He has done to persuade men to embrace the Gospel, and become sharers of His redemption. For the proud and self-sufficient, who seek not God nor His kingdom, no proof, however striking, would have removed their hardened pride, or opened their minds to conviction.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT.

ON RELAPSE INTO SIN.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest: and not finding it, he saith: I will return into my house, whence I came out.”—St. Luke xi; 24.

THOSE who have been forgiven their sins, and are converted to the Lord and pursue a life of virtue, are especially subject to the temptations of the evil one, who seeks by artifice and assault to destroy their good purpose, and to cause their relapse into sin. “Then the devil goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter, and dwell there; and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first” (Luke xi; 26). When you enter the service of the Lord prepare yourself for temptation. The devil has no need thus vigorously to assail the wicked: they are already his by their long service to him. Hence they do not experience the temptations which befall the just. For it is resistance that makes the temptation. And the wicked yield at its first approach, and as sin has become their normal state they feel nothing of the conflict which is the lot of every just man.

It is the Apostle who tells us that, “It had been better for them not to have known the way of jus-

tice than, after knowing it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them" (II Peter ii; 21). We are more guilty when we sin than the Jews who crucified Christ. For our sins are the real cause of that crucifixion: the Jews were but the instrumental cause. And the Apostle bears them witness that "if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." But we have known Him; hence our denial of Him by our sins has been far more insolent and heinous than theirs.

As it was our sins that drove Christ upon the cross, that were the nails that pierced his hands and feet, that formed His crown of thorns, that lashed Him at the pillar, that opened His side, as it was our thirst for sin that caused His thirst for our souls—verily they who easily and often backslide into sin, who run into wickedness and sin's occasions, as much as in them lies, crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, make a mockery of His passion, and put Him to an open shame. "For consider Him Who endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that ye may not be wearied, fainting in your minds. For ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb. xii; 3-4).

A frequent cause of relapse into sin is the want of a real purpose of amendment. And this amounts to saying that there is wanting a true sorrow for sin. For such sorrow must give birth to such a purpose. He who feels what sin is, and wishes from his heart that he had never sinned, necessarily proposes to sin no more. He who has a fixed re-

solve to sin no more does not easily nor at once backslide. With Divine grace, and such assiduous care as true repentance demands, he may persevere till death without grievous sin. The more and the longer this constant and unalterable will perseveres, the more it is strengthened against internal lust and external foes.

If this true purpose of amendment be had it will lead to reparation for sin; and this reparation will itself be an effectual remedy against relapse. He who wishes that he had never sinned will undo the evil of sin in its effects which yet remain. How talk of repentance, when you are enjoying the spoils of sin or grown rich by wronging your neighbor, or while he is suffering the cruel effects of your calumny or perfidy? Restitution thus made, while necessary for pardon in the Sacrament of Penance, and while the best sign of sorrow for the past, will be at the same time the surest guarantee against future relapse: he does not easily steal again, nor malign, nor do any wrong against his neighbor, who by restitution has learned that stealing is profitless, or who has felt the humiliation of acknowledging that he calumniated, or who has had to undo as far as in him lay the injury inflicted. The sin is not forgiven till the restitution be made.

The penance imposed by the priest will do much to liquidate the temporal punishment due to sin. But let him bear in mind the canonical penances formerly inflicted for the same sins that he has committed. If in this remembrance he inflicts punishment upon himself as he should, and of his own accord frequently renews the penance imposed by

the priest, and never ceases to practice the virtue of penance for sins supposed to be forgiven, he will have spurs to perseverance in his recovered innocence, and sure, if not infallible, security against temptation, and preventives against relapse into sin.

However, the essential safeguard against relapse, as its neglect is the main source and cause of sin, is the avoidance of all the occasions of sin. Without this, no one can shun sin. With the fire of concupiscence burning within us, with temptation on every side around us, with the facility and subjection to sin which habit may have formed against any virtue, flight is the only security that can be trusted. Talk not of fighting temptation: you have fallen in it time and again, it may be, times without number. Where is all the prowess to come from to you who have shown yourself a poltroon on so many fields; you have been routed and riddled so often that your soul is blackened and scarred by wounds which an eternal hell would have never blotted out, which had to be washed in the blood of the Incarnate God! If you put yourself in the peril you will infallibly perish, and perish all the more surely because of your rash confidence. You cannot put your hand in the fire and not be burned: you cannot put your soul in the way of sin and not transgress; human fragility is too great. He only effectually shuns sin who defends himself from its occasions.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT.

THE EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION.

“Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat.”—St. John vi; 5.

WHILE these words refer to the bodily want of food on the part of the multitude which had followed Jesus into the desert, yet, because their miraculous feeding was a figure of the Holy Eucharist, we may apply them to this spiritual banquet. Besides, when we pray God for our daily bread, we ask not only what may be necessary to nourish and sustain the body, but also our daily supersubstantial bread of the body of Christ, which is necessary to nourish and sustain the soul.

The soul, no less than the body, needs for its safety and salvation different foods; the word of God, for instance, of which Wisdom says, “Come, eat of My bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you.” The rejection of this word by not believing it or by not practicing it, is an unerring sign of reprobation.

Christ Our Lord is the essential food of the soul: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven.” The Apostles when called before their persecutors for His name’s sake, and the souls of the just and holy in all times amidst the crosses and

tribulations of this life, bear witness to the fortitude and self-sacrifice, the profound tranquillity and inexpressible joy and delight which this hidden manna pours into the soul.

The body of Christ present in the Holy Eucharist is beyond all other the true bread of the soul. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him." "Take ye and eat: This is My body." This spiritual food requires in the soul, its recipient, faith animated by charity: cleansed from sin, and adorned with all the holiness that this adorable Mystery calls for and which they can supply. If this is our daily bread, it is obvious that it should be partaken of more than once a year, or even many times a year; nay, even daily, as it is offered in sacrifice daily, and as our daily needs call for it; or at least we should live such a manner of life as to be not unworthy or unfit to receive it daily.

We have said that the soul must be in grace to receive worthily this Holy Sacrament; the forms of bread and wine under which it has been instituted, would indicate that it is not meant to impart life to a dead soul, but to preserve and strengthen life in a living one, as corporal food is meant to nourish and not resuscitate the body. For to a dead body food can be of no service, so life in the spirit is required for this spiritual food. It augments grace already received; yet even the first grace which this Sacrament pre-requires under sacrilege and condemnation, is not vouchsafed except to those desirous of receiving this Sacrament—the end of all the Sacraments.

In adoring the majesty of this Sacrament, the wisdom of God in establishing it under the forms of bread and wine should not escape us. To overcome the abhorrence which the eating and drinking of human flesh and blood naturally creates, He has given them to us under the forms of those articles of food to which we are most used, and by which we are strengthened and most greatly delighted. Besides, if we were to eat the body of Christ in its own proper form, we could not escape the scoffs and chidings of unbelievers and mockers. Moreover, by our belief that there takes place the change of substance which results in the body, which cannot be perceived by the sense or known except by Divine Faith, we augment this divine virtue and increase our merit; "for faith has no merit, when human reason supplies the actual experience," as St. Augustine puts it.

Other Sacraments are the channels by which grace is conveyed to the soul according to their respective ends: but this Sacrament is the font and source of all grace, from which, too, they are supplied and replenished. For it contains Jesus Christ, the Author of all grace and salvation and all heavenly gifts and endowments.

What bread and wine and other corporal food is to the body, the same but in a far better and more perfect manner is the Eucharist to the life and health and consolation of the soul. Unlike physical food, which is changed into the body it nourishes, this Divine Food after a certain manner changes us into its own nature.

Grace and truth must needs flow into the soul

when the Incarnate Word, their Author and Depositary, and by Whom they came among men, is received purely and holily and in such wise as to be grafted on His body as living members. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood, dwells in Me, and I in him." "He that eats Me, the same shall live by Me." "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." "Unless you eat My body and drink My blood, you shall not have life in you."

We have not time to point out, much less to explain, how this Sacrament remits those lesser defects which do not destroy grace in the soul; nor the virtue and strength it gives to overcome temptation and to vanquish the enemies of our salvation; how it slakens the fires of lust, inflaming the soul with increased and burning charity; removes all obstacles to, and ensures us eternal life: "He that eateth My body and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

PASSION SUNDAY.

THE CAUSES OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

“Which of you shall convict Me of sin?”—St. John viii; 46.

WITH this sublime challenge and defiance—the noblest that human lips ever uttered because no human heart was ever conscious of the innocence they imply, Jesus Christ to-day enters upon His passion; and the Church presents them to us that we may realize that it was not for His own sins, for He had none, but for the sins of men—of all men and of every particular man—that He undertook this passion and death.

While the primary and original cause why Christ died must ever be accounted His love for man, His creature, first shown in his creation and now a second time in his redemption, and further on in giving him His body to eat and His blood to drink, —yet His immediate and particular purpose was to redeem men from sin: original sin, and all the actual sin that has been committed from the beginning till now, and will be committed to the end of the world. The Son of God intended in His death and passion to redeem all men, and to blot out the sins of all ages, and to make to His Eternal Father a condign and even superabundant satisfaction for

them. He alone could do this: all created beings, because created and therefore finite, were insufficient to propitiate an infinite God for the infinite malice of sin. His Divinity gave an infinity to the sufferings endured in His human nature, and made them proportionate to the evil of sin, and commensurate with the justice of God, and capable of satisfying His injured majesty. And this expiation was truly that of man, because Christ was as truly man as God.

Not only did Christ die for sinners, but the sinners for whom He died were the authors and inflictors of all the torments He endured: for our sins were the causes and we the ministers of those torments; the Jews were but the agents or instruments, culpable indeed because acting freely and from malice, yet it was our sins that had predoomed them to this malicious service. Not only, therefore, did He die for sinners, but sinners were His executioners. "Consider," says the Apostle, "Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your souls." Our wickedness rendered the sacrifice necessary, therefore we are answerable for the crime of Deicide; the hangman is not responsible for the judicial homicide which he perpetrates; it is the crime committed and of which the criminal has been adjudged guilty. "For if the Jews had known they would have never crucified the Lord of glory," the Apostle bears witness.

As our sins drove Christ upon the cross and forced Him to undergo all the agony in Gethsemane and the abandonment of the eternal Father, it is

manifest that they who run into the occasions of sin, and who fall, it may be, easily and often into sin and wickedness, do as much as in them lies, "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame."

And this malice is out of all proportion incomparably blacker and more malignant and more unpardonable in us than it was in the Jews, His executioners, who, according to the word of St. Paul, already quoted, and of St. Peter, did it in their ignorance; while we profess to know Him, and have indeed known Him and received inestimable benefits in divers ways from Him. While we profess to know Him, and have been baptized in His name and nourished with His body and blood, by our deeds and manner of life we deny Him and seem even to lay hands upon Him.

We marvel at the treachery of Judas, the faint-heartedness of Peter, the ingratitude of the Jews, the injustices of the judges before whom He stood, the cruelty and baseness of the hireling mob, the hypocrisy of the high priests, the savage fury and contumelious jeers of the soldiers and executioners: yet, tell me, if every one of those crimes and a thousand others equally injurious to Christ, but in a form far more loathsome and in a degree beyond measure more guilty, is not daily, nay, hourly, committed by Christians, His professed friends and followers, in their shameful lives and shocking deeds; and all this in spite of the blood of Calvary and in contempt of the love which it sealed? Let every one examine for Himself how many times, countless times, he has, by his sins in divers ways and

with varying dye of guilt, all the greater because done since the Sacrifice of Calvary, re-crucified to himself the Lord Jesus and made Him a shame and mockery before men, far greater than that which He appeared on the cross hooted and jeered by the insulting and infuriate crowd that gazed their eyes and glutted their bloodthirsty hearts upon the appalling sight of the Son of God hanging between two thieves, the outcasts of society, having been rejected as an object of mercy for a cut-throat and homicide, Barabbas, this one taken to their bosom and pardoned, and Jesus made the object of their unglutted vengeance.

Christ Our Lord, as the self-offered Victim for our sins, was delivered to death by the Father and Himself. "For the wickedness of My people have I smitten Him," says the Lord through Isaias. And the same prophet, full of the spirit of God, "Saw the Lord full of sores and wounds," exclaimed, "All us like sheep have gone astray, every one after his own way, and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Or, in those words in which the Apostle would urge us to trust in the infinite mercy and goodness of God: "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up to death for us all, how shall He not also with Him, give us all good things? (Rom. viii; 32)."

PALM SUNDAY.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

“ And taking bread, He gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them, saying: This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for My remembrance. In like manner, the cup also, after supper, saying: This is the cup, the new covenant in My blood, which shall be shed for you.”—St. Luke xxii; 19-20.

WHEN we contemplate the works of God within us, above us, and around us; when we contemplate their infinity no less in what seems least than in what seems greatest—the greatest far beyond and the smallest far less than eye or mind can comprehend, so that we are overwhelmed and confounded not less by those insects that are twenty-five thousand times less than the power of the eye than by the heavens, millions of times greater than the capacity of the mind, we are filled with sentiments of adoration, homage, praise, worship, love, gratitude, self-abasement at the omnipotence, omniscience, supreme dominion, far-reaching providence, infinite perfections, and all the other attributes which the great Creator has so copiously shadowed forth on the face of creation as it is known to us, and even more by that which remains unknown or incomprehensible to us.

Nothing is more natural than that the rational creature, overwhelmed by these glorious evidences of an infinite God, and overcome by the consciousness of his utter dependence and nothingness as a creature, should seek to acknowledge the supreme dominion of the Creator, in his own self-prostration and self-annihilation, and render Him homage and worship and gratitude as supreme and as profound as his limited nature and faculties allow. Led by the light of nature alone and the instinct of his heart, man from the beginning discharged this duty, acknowledging God's dominion and confessing his own subjection by acts of sacrifice. Thus Abel sacrificed to the Lord the firstlings of his flock, and Cain of the first fruits of his crops.

Hence a sacrifice comes to be defined: "The offering of a sensible thing made to God alone by a lawful minister to recognize His supreme dominion over all things, which is consecrated and immolated by a religious rite." Or, "An offering by which we confess God to be the Author of life and death."

As already intimated in the mention of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, sacrifices were of various kinds: their varied character or divisions were determined by the times either of the law of nature or the written law in which they were offered. As to the matter which constituted them, some were called offerings or victims; others, immolations; others, effusions. Because of the modes in which they were offered, some were called holocausts or peace offerings or offerings for sin. Because of their purpose some were *latreutica* for professing

towards God dependence and servitude; some were in thanksgiving for benefits received; some were imprecatory for obtaining new favors; some were propitiatory for appeasing the offended God.

All these ends and special purposes the Sacrifice of the New Law comprehends in Itself alone. The Mass is the unbloody Sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. It is a relative Sacrifice because referred to the Sacrifice of the Cross, which it commemorates and represents by the consecration of bread and wine, or mystical immolation. This Sacrifice is an infinite and inexhaustible treasury of Divine riches by which, if well used and with the right dispositions, we may purchase the grace and love of God for ourselves and unite ourselves to Him in the most intimate and, if we will, indissoluble and eternal union.

In it also we find a most special and suitable and, we may say, adequate thanksgiving for His countless and inestimable benefits which He bestows upon us in the natural no less than in the spiritual order.

Yet this Holy Sacrifice is not to be accounted a Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving only, or a mere commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross: but it is also truly a propitiatory Sacrifice, by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us.

If with a clean heart, and ardent faith, a true grief for our sins, we cannot doubt that through this holy Sacrifice we shall obtain from the Lord in due time mercy and grace. With its sweetness He is so delighted that, bestowing upon us grace and penance, He pardons our sins. As often as this Sacrifice is offered up, the work of our salva-

tion is renewed, and the plentiful fruits of the bloody Sacrifice on the Cross are shed upon us through this unbloody Sacrifice.

This Sacrifice, duly and lawfully offered, is beyond comprehension, most acceptable and grateful to God: for what could be more so than the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of His only begotten Son, the Incarnate Word, consubstantial and co-eternal with Himself, the Figure of His substance and the Splendor of His glory, Who for us men came down upon earth, and suffered and died for our salvation! If the sacrifices of the Old Law, imperfect as they were and emblematic in character, and of which it was written: "Sacrifices and oblations Thou wouldst not" and "If Thou wouldst have sacrifice, I would give it to Thee accordingly, but Thou delightest not in burnt offerings," yet so pleased the Lord that "He smelt the odor of their sweetness," as Scripture testifies, that is, were indeed grateful and acceptable to Him: how infinitely grateful and acceptable must not this ineffable Sacrifice and greatest of all mysteries be, wherein is sacrificed and offered to His Eternal Majesty that only begotten Son Whom He declared from heaven to be His "beloved Son in Whom He was well pleased." Learn, then, ye faithful, to study attentively, and meditate religiously what things ye are here present at, and be not as those who at prayer and service tempt the Lord by their indevotion and voluntary distractions or preoccupied minds.

The Holy Eucharist was established by Christ at His last supper; when establishing It, He said

to His Apostles, "Do this in memory of Me." It is priests that should sacrifice and offer His body, at once a Sacrament or the Divine food of our souls by which their spiritual life is supported, and a perpetual Sacrifice by which God's supreme authority is recognized, man's thanksgiving to Him rendered and gratitude expressed, sin expiated, and the just anger of God at our sins propitiated and turned to mercy and pity; a Sacrifice which glorifies Heaven, opens Purgatory, and stands between the uplifted anger of God and the sins of men, and ransoms and purifies their souls. It is indeed a true and proper Sacrifice; it is not the mere eating of Christ's body, for that would not be a sacrifice, as the Council of Trent teaches.

A Sacrament is perfected in the consecration: but the essence of a sacrifice requires that it be offered; in this its virtue consists. The Holy Eucharist, kept in the tabernacle or carried to the sick, has not the nature of a sacrifice, but of a Sacrament: as such it gives to them that receive it cause of merit, and all those other graces that belong to it. As a Sacrifice, it is not only efficacious to merit, but to accomplish as well. For as Christ in His passion merited and satisfied for us, so in the offering of this Sacrifice, which binds Christians in one, we merit the fruit of His passion and satisfy for sin.

The efficacy of this Sacrifice is such that it profits not only those who offer and those who receive it, but extends to all the faithful living and dead and who are not as yet fully purified. It is no less profitable for these than for the sins and satisfac-

tions, punishments, or other necessities of the living.

It was prefigured in the Old Law in the Paschal Lamb, which was offered as a sacrifice and eaten as a sacrament by the children of Israel, and in the bread and wine offered by the priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech, and by various other types and oracles and ordinances. Of this sacrifice Malachy prophesied: "From the rising up of the sun to the going down thereof, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place a clean oblation is offered to My name, because My name is great among the Gentiles," says the Lord of hosts. In divers kinds of sacrifices, before the law and after, this Sacrifice was foreshadowed. For this one Sacrifice, as the substance and fulfilment to which all other sacrifices pointed, contains all the good things which they but shadowed or signified. Yet none of them better prefigured this Sacrifice of Jesus Christ than that of Melchisedech. For Christ, declaring Himself to be a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech, at His last supper offered His own Body and Blood to God the Father under the species of bread and wine.

When our Saviour was about to offer Himself to God the Father upon the altar of the cross, He could not give us any more illustrious manifestation of His immense and boundless love than leaving this visible and unutterable Sacrifice, by which might be restored that which was the next day to be sacrificed once in blood on the cross, and the memory thereof might be perpetuated and honored by the Church to her advantage throughout the whole world and every hour till the end of time.

Wherefore, what is done in the Mass and what was done on the cross is one and the same Sacrifice: for It is one and the same oblation or Victim which is in the Mass, Christ Jesus, Who once only offered Himself in His blood upon the cross. For the bloody and the unbloody Host is not two hosts, but one Host only, whose Sacrifice is renewed daily, according to the command of Christ: "Do this in commemoration of Me." And the priest who offers this Sacrifice daily upon the altar is one and the same with Him Who offered it over upon the cross, Christ the Lord. For he acts not in his own person, but in the person of Christ, when he consecrates Christ's body and blood; for he says not, "This is Christ's body," but "This is My Body"; that is, assuming the person of Christ, he changes the substance of the bread and wine into the true substance of His body and blood.

HOLY THURSDAY.

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST PREFIGURED IN THE OLD LAW.

“And the Son of man goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for that man if he had not been born.”—St. Mark xiv; 21.

AMONG the Jews in the Old Law the most disgraceful and most cruel punishment was death by crucifixion. It was inflicted only on the most guilty and criminal malefactors. For their law declared him “accursed of God, who hangeth upon a tree.” Hence Our Lord, making Himself the voluntary Victim for the sins of men, and placing Himself between the upraised anger of God and the sins of men, invoking upon Himself as a vicarious sacrifice all the anger of the eternal Father, found in the cross the fit instrument of His execution.

This manner of death, than which none could be more fearful or horrible or shameful or execrable, was most suited to banish from the human breast not only the fear of death, but even the fear of death in its worst and most dreadful forms: to teach us that by him who lives Christianly neither death nor any form of death is to be feared, as St. Augustine says.

Sin had come from the eating of the forbidden

fruit. It was not without meaning that Christ, paying to the Father the satisfaction which He had decreed for the sin of our first parents, should allow Himself to be nailed to a tree, thus turning what had been the means or fuel of sin and death into the instrument of salvation and life.

The murder of Abel by Cain was a figure of the slaughter of Jesus by the Jews. The innocence and piety of Abel incited the envy and inflamed the heart of Cain with anger, and moved him to destroy him to whom he was bound by the closest ties: the divine virtues of Jesus, the most innocent of men, engendered the hate and jealousy of the priests and mob of sycophants and time servers that hung upon their favor, and sought to redeem themselves in the eyes of the priests for their sometime loyalty to Jesus by demanding His blood and driving Him upon a cross. All of whom should be bound to Him by the strongest claims of gratitude. No wonder He asked the Jews, "For which of His good works did they stone Him?" The blood of Abel cried aloud from earth to heaven: of that of Jesus the Apostle writes: "Ye have drawn near to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and the shedding of His blood speaking louder than that of Abel." And the parallel is continued in the punishment visited upon them: exiled from home and wandering throughout the earth; and withal marked among men.

The sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham, is a most vivid figure of the sacrifice of Jesus given over to death by His own will and that of His Eternal Father. Not only is the one the type and

forerunner of the other in their general character and outline, but even in details do they correspond. Isaac was the subject of promise to his father Abraham: God promised Jesus through His prophets in the holy Scriptures. Isaac was destined by his father for the sacrifice, and was by him led to death: "God spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Isaac carried the wood upon which He was to be consumed: Jesus carried the cross upon which He was executed. But here the comparison ceased; for God seeing the faith of Abraham, stayed his hand, and a goat was substituted: but He allowed Jesus to be immolated for all the children of men whom He had created, and whose redemption Jesus had voluntarily undertaken at the price of His blood and death.

The Paschal Lamb, first immolated by the Jews when they went forth from Egypt, and whose blood smearing the door-posts was to be the sign to the avenging angel that the children of the Jews dwelling within were to be saved from the massacre of the first-born of the Egyptians,—decreed as a chastisement for holding in bondage and after broken promises of their liberation the people of Israel,—continued thereafter on the eve of the Pasch till the Sacrifice of Christ Himself, which was its embodiment and fulfillment: for our Passover, Christ, is sacrificed; He was the immaculate Lamb, without blemish, Whose blood shed before the foundation of the world. The very time of year, the month, the day they were wont to celebrate the Pasch, Jesus, of Whom it was the figure and emblem, was delivered up to the Jews to be sacrificed on the cross.

The Paschal Lamb was the remembrance of the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, for the accomplishment of which the blood of the lamb had been the chosen means. By the blood of Jesus the whole race has been freed from the bondage of sin and Satan, and "asserted into the admirable light and freedom of the children of God."

It was forbidden to break a bone of this lamb, which had been the salvation of the Jews: this was in figure of what was to happen to Him Who was the true salvation of men, and which was written: "Ye shall not break a bone of Him." And St. John writes that, when the soldiers came, according to the custom of breaking the legs of malefactors on the cross, "After they came to Jesus, and saw that He was already dead, they broke not His legs."

As it was only by the blood of the lamb smearing the houses of Israel that all were saved that were to be saved, so it is only by the blood of Jesus anointing our souls in grace and in the Sacraments that all to be saved are saved.

All the sacrifices of the Jews were figures of Him, the Victim for all the sins of men, which God promised when Adam fell; the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, and restore the race fallen through the stratagems of the evil one; "Whom God set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, to the showing of His justice, for the remission of former sins" (Rom. iii).

Christ compared Himself to the brazen serpent raised by Moses in the desert for the curing of the wounds by the serpents, endured by the Israelites;

“ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but have life everlasting ” (St. John iii). Those who looked upon the brazen serpent were made whole from the bites of the serpents: hence “ looking to the Author and Finisher of faith, Jesus,” men are cured from the attacks or bites of the devil and the poison of sin.

The rock which sent water to quench the parching thirst of the Jews in the desert, the type of “ living water springing up into eternal life.” “ And all drank the same spiritual drink: and they drank of the spiritual rock, which followed them: and the rock was Christ ” (I Cor. x).

The scapegoat upon whose head the High-priest with solemn rite placed all the sins and evils of the Israelites, and thus laden, as it were, with the sins of others, knowing not sin itself, was driven into the desert to be slaughtered, was an image of Him Who, laden with the sins of men, went to death upon the cross as an expiation, and for the propitiation of the eternal Father. Hence the Apostle writes: “ For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary, for sin, by the high priest, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us then go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach ” (Heb. xiii). “ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer, being sprinkled, sanctify unto the cleansing of the flesh those who are defiled; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Holy

Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to worship the living God?" (Heb. ix.)

The fifty-third chapter of Isaias is replete with predictions of the sufferings and death of Christ; I will give one: "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and He was dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He opened not His mouth." "Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised; whereupon we esteemed Him not" (L III; 3). "And they will say to him: What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands? And he will say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved me. Awake, O Sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that cleaveth to Me, saith the Lord of hosts: strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand to the little ones" (Zachariah xiii). "And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation" (Dan. ix; 26). "And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to the slaughter: and I knew not that they had devised counsels against me, saying: Let us put wood on his head, and cut him off from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more" (Jer. xi; 19). "They have pierced my hands and

feet. They have numbered all my bones. And they look and stare upon me. They have parted my garments amongst them : and upon my vesture they cast lots " (Ps xxi). " O God, my God, look upon me : why has Thou forsaken me ? But I am a worm, and no man : the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn : they shoot out the lip and wag the head " (Ps. xxi).

GOOD FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S PASSION AN EXPIATION.

Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and He was dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He opened not His mouth.—Isaiah liii; 4-7.

WHO is it that suffers? Christ Himself declares: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will deliver Him to death; and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day He will rise again." And the disciples also declare Who it is, in the words of the psalm: "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people devise vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers assembled together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth there assembled together in this city

against Thy holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, to do what Thy hand, and Thy counsel decreed to be done " (Acts, iv).

It is, therefore, God and our Lord that suffers: It is the Word that was in the beginning with God, by Whom were made all things, Whom God hath appointed the heir of all things, by Whom also He made the world: Who being the brightness of His glory and the impression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made a purification of sins, sitteth at the right hand of Majesty on high " (Heb. i). " He it is Whom the angels adore, Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Whose throne is forever and forever, Who in the beginning founded the heavens, and of Whose hands the heavens are the work; He it was " Who truly bore our weaknesses, and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed " (Isa. liii). " Christ suffered for us, leaving to you an example, that ye should follow in the steps of Him, Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth: Who when He was reviled, reviled not: when He suffered, threatened not, but delivered Himself up to him who judged Him unjustly: Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by Whose stripes ye are healed " (St. Peter i; 2).

We may indeed contemplate, but we shall never comprehend the unfathomable mystery of God thus suffering and dying. Our hearts cannot conceive, nor words relate the unutterable majesty of Him Who thus subjects Himself to death, to even an ignominious death, for us men and for our salvation. He that suffers is at once God and Man: the Creator suffers and dies for the creature, the work of His hands: the Lord for His servants: He by Whom angels, men, heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible were made: He in Whom, and by Whom, and of Whom, are all things. It is no marvel, therefore, what we read in Scripture, that when He suffered and died, the whole frame of the world trembled, the rocks were rent, the dead arose, the sun was darkened, and darkness covered the face of the earth. If insensible and dumb nature in its mute but unutterably expressive way bemoaned the agony and death of its Creator, with what heart-wrung tears and bitter grief should not human hearts, as the living stones of this edifice, as the rational beings of creation, betray their emotion and agony? If St. Paul represents the earth as groaning under the primal curse, longing for its delivery from the thralldom of sin, how should we not be pierced with anguish and mortal dread at the Sacrifice exhibited on the hill of Calvary for our sins and the sins of all men, as much for each as for all, as much for all as for each! At the mere mention of such a Sacrifice, could we wonder if the vaulted roof of this church, which echoes such a sound, were rent in twain, as the veil of the tabernacle when Christ expired? Or, if such a miracle is no longer

to be looked for, should we not at least expect that human hearts which caused this Sacrifice, out of very dismay for their work, or out of burning gratitude for the love that impelled it, would be crushed and bleeding at this scene upon which the angels looked down in transports of amazement, which men could never realize, and which at its best no human thought could ever comprehend, which God alone can fathom?

And then, when you reflect and realize that all this suffering was undergone for all the sins of men—not only to cleanse us from the original sin of our nature, but for all the personal sins of all the children of our race, and even for the sins of those very executioners who inflict those torments, and at whose hands He was mocked, lashed, crowned, bruised, crucified—what is to be thought of those who sin, who remain sunk in sin, or who rise therefrom, therein to backslide as to their vomit, who fester and wallow in sin? How little do such “look to the author and finisher of faith, Jesus, who for the joy set before Him, endured a cross, despising shame, and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God.” How little do they “consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners against Himself, that ye may not be wearied, fainting in your minds.” How little have they “resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (Heb. xii).

For since it is our sins that have driven Christ the Lord upon the cross, assuredly those who wanton and revel in outrage and iniquity, again, as far as in them lies, “crucify to themselves the Son of God, and make Him a mockery” (Heb. vi). Which out-

rage seems all the greater in us than it was in the Jews, seeing that the Apostle says that if they had known it, they would never have been guilty of deicide: "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (I Cor. ii; 8). While we profess to know Him; and by our deeds denying it, in a certain manner we seem to lay violent hands upon Him. We as Christians have known Him for two thousand years; we even recognize Him in promise and prophecy and symbol from the beginning of the world. His divinity, mission, and the redemption which he hath wrought are the life of our souls. The price of the ransom paid for us, the mysteries and truth of His faith, with all these are we familiar and in them we profess the deepest faith. We denounce with no little bitterness the Jews, His blind persecutors. And all the while we have no remorse or reproach for ourselves who were and are His knowing executors. We continue with impunity to sin as if we, the true culprits, were innocent of His blood.

The Sacrifice of Christ was an expiatory Sacrifice: upon Him were placed all the sins of men. "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed . . . and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was his own will, and He opened not His mouth: He was led as a

sheep to the slaughter, and He was dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He opened not His mouth " (Isaias liii). " For to this ye are called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving to you an example, that ye should follow in the steps of Him, who committeth no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth: who when He was reviled, reviled not: when He suffered, threatened not, but delivered Himself up to him who judged Him unjustly: who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes ye are healed " (I Peter ii). " Who in the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears, when He offered up prayers and supplications to Him Who could save Him from death, was heard for His reverence: and indeed, though He was the Son of God, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered: and being consummated, He became for all who obey Him a cause of eternal salvation " (Heb. v). " My soul is sorrowful even unto death. My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou " (Matt. xxvi). " And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly. And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down on to the ground " (Luke xxii). " Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me " (Matt. xxvii). " He spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all . . ." (Rom. viii). " Him, Who knew no sin, He hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in Him "

(II Cor. v; 21). "But God commends His love towards us: because, while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for us: much more, therefore, now being justified by His blood, shall we be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v). "For ye are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body" (I Cor. vi).

That God was pleased to effect the salvation of men, not by a decree of His Will but by this Sacrifice, was more congruous, according to St. Thomas, for the following reasons, which time compels to present briefly in so many sentences without enlargement. The suitableness of a method or instrument for a given purpose is, in the proportion or degree of its efficiency, not only for the end sought but also for effecting other results kindred or expedient thereto. The passion of Christ, as the means of man's liberation, not only liberates him, but also confers upon him many spiritual benefits besides. By it man knows how much God loves him, and by this man is incited to love God, in which consists the perfection of human salvation. He gives men an example of obedience, humility, firmness, justice and other virtues, shown in the passion of Christ, which are necessary to human salvation. Jesus Christ by His passion not only redeems man from sin, but also merits for him justifying grace and the glory of beatitude. A greater duty and necessity is laid upon man of preserving himself immune from sin, who knows himself to be ransomed from sin by the

blood of Christ. This method of redemption redounds to the greater dignity of man: as man was deceived and enslaved by the devil, thus also it should be man that would overcome the devil; and as man merited death, so man by dying should overcome death. For these reasons it was more becoming that we should be redeemed by the Passion of Christ than by the Will of God alone (St. Thomas Pars III; xlvii; 3).

EASTER SUNDAY.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

“ But he saith to them: Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him.”—St. Mark xvi; 6.

ON the third day after He was crucified, died, and was buried, Jesus Christ rose triumphant from the dead, according to His own word: “ The Son of man must go up to Jersusalem, suffer many things, die, and the third day rise again.” “ God raised Him up on the third day, and showed Him openly not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen beforehand of God, unto us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead ” (Acts x; 40-41).

Although the body of Christ was spiritualized and glorified and immortal—changed in these added gifts—yet as to substance and identity it was the same body which He had had during life and which suffered and died on the cross. His resurrection was a true one: therefore His resuscitated body was His true body. “ Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see that I have.” “ Look at My hands and feet, for it is I Myself; and as He said this, He showed His hands and

feet" (Luke xxiv). His soul was present in this body; for He discoursed with His Apostles, and "expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." This soul was that which He had before His death: for He says: "These are the words which I spake to you, while I was yet with you."

On the return of His soul from Limbo, whence it had gone to announce to them there detained the news of their redemption, both soul and body were reunited by the power of His Divinity, which had never abandoned one or the other; for He raised Himself from the dead. No mere man could by his own power raise himself from death and restore his own life. This belongs to Divine omnipotence. "I lay down My life," He said, "that I may take it again; and I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again" (John x; 17-18. He had said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple," (He spoke of the temple of His body), "and in three days, I will rebuild it." Where we read in Scripture that He was raised by the Father, it refers to Him as man. For indeed He was raised by the Divinity which was one with Him and the Father.

"Christ is risen from the dead the first fruits of them that sleep: for by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead; and, as in Adam all die, so, also, in Christ all shall be made alive: but every one in his own order; the first fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ, who have believed in His coming." In these words the Apostle speaks of a resurrection unto eternal life; a resurrection altogether unlike that which was conferred

upon many before Christ, and by Christ, who were restored to life, yet destined again to die. But in Christ's resurrection and in ours which is based upon it, He and we arise to die no more. "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no longer have dominion over Him" (Rom. vi; 9).

The Resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith. For the Apostle says, "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, for you are yet in your sins." For although Christ had wrought miracles and done works such as no other man had, so that the Jews had no excuse for their unbelief, or, in His own words, "if He had not done works such as no one else had done they would be without sin, but as He had done such works their sins remaineth," yet the decisive, culminating proof, which He had always held in reserve and promised to give, was His resurrection from the dead. "An evil and adulterous generation shall receive no sign but the sign of Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the bosom of the earth" (Luke xi). Our Lord frequently spoke of His resurrection, and seldom or never of His passion without mention of His resurrection. Thus: "The Son of man shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged and spat upon; and after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again" (Luke xvii; 32-33). Hence it was necessary that this word should be verified, this promise fulfilled, His

divine veracity must be redeemed. His resurrection, so manifestly the work of omnipotence, will put the seal of divine authenticity on all His miracles and proclaim them to be what they obviously are, the works of God.

His resurrection is the irresistible argument of His Divinity. What more absolute and overwhelming proof could be given? To raise from the dead, or to rise from the dead, has ever been accounted in the sense of humanity as the very emblem of the impossible to men, as the very sign and exercise of omnipotence. No one is exempt from the necessity of death; no one dead can force its unyielding grasp and return to life. He who could, of himself, escape death, or, dead, break its bond, would be God. Or, what amounts to the same thing, He who would declare Himself to be divine, and give as a proof His resurrection from the dead, would unequivocally be what He claims: for the eternal God could not sanction a lie by raising a liar from the dead, proclaiming him to be God who was only a man, and placing the seal of Divinity upon an impostor, thus leading men into invincible error. Whether then we say that Christ raised Himself from the dead, or that the Father raised Him, the meaning is the same, and the argument equally peremptory. In His Resurrection we believe and profess that Christ Jesus is the immortal God, full of glory, the Redeemer of men, the Destroyer of sin, the Conqueror of death and hell.

Even as man it was becoming that God should raise Jesus from the dead. "He who humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death; even unto the

death of the cross," should be exalted, and "given a name which is above every other name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those that are in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth." The justice of God required that He who through obedience to Him became an outcast from men and was covered with contumely and ignominy and deluged with suffering, should thus be glorified before angels and men.

As Christ rose from the dead, we, too, shall rise again. "By a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead." "Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who of His great mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible" (I Peter ii). His resurrection is the cause or, as it were, the instrument of our resurrection, as Christ's humanity was the efficient cause which God employed in the work of our redemption.

It is at the same time the model of our resurrection. As the body of Christ rose changed, made glorious and immortal, so our bodies shall be spiritualized and glorified. "But our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will reform our vile body conformably to His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things to Himself" (Phil. iii; 20-21).

But if we are to rise from the dead by the power of Christ's resurrection, and unto its pattern, our spiritual resurrection from sin, and abidance in virtue and holiness must precede: without this, we shall in-

deed arise, but unto woe and everlasting shame. And this moral resurrection must be in the image of Christ's resurrection. He rose to die no more, we must rise no longer to backslide into sin. And this the Apostle declares: "As Christ rose again from the dead, by the glory of the Father; so should we also walk in newness of life: for if we have been planted with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. . . . Knowing that Christ being risen from the dead, now dies no more, death shall have no more dominion over Him. For in that He died to sin, He died once; but in that He lives, He lives to God: so reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ" (Rom. vi; 4).

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

“Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, when the disciples were gathered together through fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you.”—St. John xx; 19.

IN the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we have the firm assurance of our own future Resurrection as a necessary consequence and legitimate outcome. The two facts are linked together. If Christ is risen, we shall arise: if Christ is not risen, we shall not arise. This is the reasoning of the Apostle St. Paul. “Now if Christ is preached, that He rose from the dead, how do some among you say, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again; and if Christ is not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” “For if the dead rise not, neither is Christ risen.”

We shall arise in the very same bodies that we have in this life—identical in their substance, though changed and glorified by the new qualities which will be added to them in imitation of Christ's body as it rose from the grave. The word resurrection implies the identical substance of the restored body:

otherwise it would not be a resurrection. The words of holy Job proclaim the same: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and on the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh I shall see my God; Whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

The prophet Daniel declares that of those who sleep in the dust of the earth, some shall awake to eternal life and some to eternal reproach.

To the Sadducees asking whose should she be who had been wife to seven brothers, Christ does not deny the resurrection of the body, as the occasion invited if there were no resurrection, but declares that they "err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God"; and by mentioning the power of God intimated the power to be shown by God in the resurrection. "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are as angels of God in heaven," without the passions of mortals. And he proceeds to argue the resurrection from the words of the Books of Moses, which the Sadducees professed to hold in special honor. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." That is, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob still live—God is the God of the living; whence the future resurrection, as a matter of course, is easily credible.

Christ rose the first fruits of those that sleep, the first-born of the dead. He is our Brother in the flesh: His destiny shall be our destiny. God made use of the Humanity of Jesus Christ as the instrument of our redemption. Whatever He did for that

Humanity will He do for us: He raised that Humanity from the dead, bringing it forth glorious and immortal from the grave. The same will He do for us. Christ's resurrection bespeaks and is the cause of our own.

Christ by His sufferings and death purchased for us the grace by which we are restored to all that we lost in Adam. In Adam we lost immortal life, and in Christ we regain it. As He died for our sins He rose for our justification, and by his rising we obtain all the gifts that in Adam we lost.

"By one man came sin, and by sin, death, and so death passed unto all men in whom all had sinned." Adam was the physical head of the race, Christ the moral head of the race restored in Him. We were born of Adam's nature, we were reborn of Christ's grace. "As in Adam we all died, in Christ we were made to live." Just as reasonable that we should all be born unto life in one Christ as that we should all die in one Adam. If the prevarication of one sufficed for the condemnation of all, the justice of one suffices for all unto justification.

How can this be? how can God resuscitate the dead? I answer: How did God create the living? if there could be any question of ease or difficulty with Omnipotence, is it not as possible to bring together in one body the particles that once formed it, as to bring those particles together for its first formation?—to reunite component parts as to originally constitute them?

How resuscitate the dead? How utter these very words that fall from my tongue? tell me how your mind pulsates your tongue to articulate this very

question? How does your soul, a spiritual being, give motion to your tongue, a thing of matter, to enunciate this objection? Tell me the mysterious union that must subsist between soul and body by which spiritual concepts become living, palpitating sounds, that strike the ear and are conveyed to other souls?

If we had no knowledge of the fact, and if we were told in Scripture that God would in time create a being that would be at once a spirit and matter, that two apparently incompatible beings would be united in one by a seeming impossible union, an angel and an animal, the wise skeptic would shake his head and utter his authoritative "impossible" or "absurd"; which would be re-echoed and endorsed by all those who scoff at Revelation, and pretend to believe not in the supernatural, nor in aught but what they comprehend. Yet, look into yourself, and you have the mystery realized within you, the impossible become possible and reduced to the actual, and made a fact palpable to your consciousness, visible to your sight, hearable to your ear,—a fact which no man can gainsay without denying his own being and existence.

If Revelation taught you that God had made somewhere in space a being that never changed and that always changed—that never for a moment ceased to be what it had always been, and that at the same time never for a moment continued to be absolutely what it always was—that in it was realized continual permanence and continual change—two evident contradictions—you would account it an absurdity and as unworthy of God, contrary

to all reason, and to be rejected as silly, and insulting to your lofty intelligence. Yet, look around you, or rather look into yourself, and learn what every tyro in science will teach you is incontestably certain: that your body is continually changed, that so complete and unceasing is the change going on within you from the hour of your birth to that of your death, that at the end of every few years there is not a particle of you which existed at the beginning of that short period; that the soul alone and the gradual nature of the change has preserved your identity. In view then of the truths of nature, which you are so far from understanding, learn to think respectfully of the mysteries of Revelation, and of the Almighty Power which can do not only what you comprehend, but what is past not only your intelligence but beyond all comprehension.

To him asking how the dead rise again; or with what manner of body they shall come, the Apostle with his usual energy makes answer: "Fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, unless it die first. And that which thou sowest, not the body that shall be thou sowest, but the bare grain, for instance, of wheat, or of any of the rest. But God giveth it a body, as He willeth: and to every seed its proper body. . . . It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. . . . It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (I Cor. xv).

The seed that is planted must rot before it receives from the genial embrace of the earth its fructifying power; the petal of the flower perishes before the fruit is formed; the seed cast in the furrows pre-

pared for it, commingles and is made one with the earth before it shoots forth into stem and branch and fruit; the tiny acorn has in it the germinating virtue which issues in the lofty and massive oak. What wonder, therefore, that the process which Divine Power employs for nature, He should have likewise adapted for the resurrection of bodies, and the renovation of the human race? As by water and the Holy Ghost souls are regenerated unto eternal life, why may not bodies be resuscitated unto immortal life by the earth and the power of the same Divine Spirit? Who is going to place bounds to omnipotence, and say that this corruptible cannot put on incorruption, and this mortal cannot put on immortality? Who will say that God cannot perpetuate what He has begun, and endow with immortal life what He has been capable of giving life to at all? With nature teeming with mystery, are we to deny that God cannot, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, raise the dead incorruptible and changed and glorious?

Rest secure in the assurance of Jesus Christ. "He that eateth My body and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him; and I will raise him up in the last day." "For if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, will not He Who raised Jesus from the dead resuscitate your mortal bodies because of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them? "A day shall come when they who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall arise, some to eternal life, and some to everlasting shame." For though all shall arise, we shall not all be changed: the wicked shall not rise glori-

ous; this is the privilege of the saints of God, who like Jesus shall rise in the image of His glorified body; spiritualized, and possessing gifts like unto His as He came forth from the sepulchre. The wicked shall arise immortal indeed that they may be capable of everlasting misery, but destitute of the other qualities which shall belong to the bodies of the elect.

However, if the resurrection of Christ be the model of our future resurrection, it must also be the model of our moral resurrection from the grave of sin. As He has risen from the grave of death, to die no more, we must rise from the grave of sin to sin no more. Unless this moral resurrection precede, we shall never rise in the image of His bodily resurrection. Unlike others who rose from death to die again, Christ rose to die no more: such also must be the character of our changed life; no more backsliding into sin.

One sovereign test is given us to discern the genuineness of our resurrection. If we be truly risen from sin, as Christ has risen from death, seek the things that are above, not the things that are below: if we still lie flat on the earth in abject slavery to the things of sense, we are not risen with Christ: if breaking the trammels of sin and sense, we seek whatsoever things are good, and true, and pure, and holy, if we abide continually in the mandates of the Lord and live in His fear and love, we have the highest assurance that we have indeed risen with Him, and that thus serving Him in this life, we shall possess Him in glory and bliss forevermore in the life to come.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE DUTIES OF PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. . . . And the hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and hath no care for the sheep.”—St. John x; 11, 13.

By the name of pastors are signified not only bishops and rulers of souls, but also parents, masters, magistrates, those in authority, and kings or lawful government. The natural law teaches us our duties to all these, and the commandments of God and the precepts of the Gospel give expression and divine sanction to the natural law, and inculcate upon all the duty of submission and obedience thereto. Yet, as we have treated of filial duty and civil loyalty elsewhere, and for sake of treating but one subject at a time, we shall confine ourselves to the reciprocal duties of pastor and people.

We are to honor our pastors. We are to esteem them highly, and entertain lofty sentiments and worthy thoughts of them. This honor will comprehend love, respect, obedience, and reverence. The word honor expresses the duty we owe them better than love or fear: for he that loves does not always reverence; and he that fears does not always love. But when we truly honor in our heart, we love and fear.

“Let the priests that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they that labor in the

word and doctrine," says St. Paul to Timothy (v; 17). It is scarcely to be expected that people to-day will render to their pastors the benevolence which the Galatians evidenced, and which drew from the Apostle the declaration, "For I bear you witness, that, if it were possible, you would have pulled out your very eyes and given them to me." Both pastor and people will to-day be content with a less exaggerated and demonstrative love and loyalty. It will probably produce more satisfactory, and certainly more abiding fruit.

Priests are to receive from the people what is required for the necessary purposes of life. "For they that serve the altar should live by the altar," as the same Apostle declares. Otherwise they will be compelled to give time and attention to mercenary matters, and thus deprive the people of the time which could be spent in their service. "Whoever goes to war at his own costs?" asks the Apostle (I Cor. ix; 7). "Honor the priests, and cleanse thyself with thy arms; give them their part, as it is commanded thee, of the first fruits and of trespass offering," says Ecclesiasticus (vii; 33-34). All this to-day and in our own country can be referred to the duty of building the church and supporting the school and discharging generally your obvious duty of contributing to the support of religion; for the livelihood of the pastors is included in it, and fortunately is not left to capricious and often stunted generosity.

The Apostle teaches that pastors are to be obeyed. "Obey," says he, "them that are put over you, and subject yourselves; for they watch as those that

shall give an account for your souls" (Heb. xiii; 7). Nay, more, it is commanded by Christ our Lord that we obey even wicked pastors, when He says, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses; all things therefore whatsoever they say to you, observe and do. But do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not" (Matt. xxv). Nor is there anything remarkable in this duty thus laid down. For, who would think of refusing obedience to civil authority or contemning the judge's decision because of abuse in the one, or sin in the other? We are to honor and obey the office, and for the time those who sit in it, and because they sit in it. Likewise, our duty to pastors. The motive of our duty, and the kind of honor we are to render to them and all others whom we are to obey, is given by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained by God. Therefore he that resisted the powers, resisted the ordinance of God." And by St. Peter: "Be ye subject to every human creature for God's sake; whether to the king, as excelling the rest; or to magistrates, as sent by him" (I Peter ii; 12). St. Paul commanded the Christians to obey Nero, and Daniel commanded the Jews to obey the Persians. When we honor the wicked in authority, the honor is referred to God. We do not reverence or approve their wickedness by our obedience, but the divine authority temporarily residing in them. But if they command anythings unjust or wicked, as it is unjust and a wanton abuse of power and the exercise of will, and not

of reason, they are by no means to be obeyed. "Whether it be just to obey men rather than God, judge ye," says the Apostle.

Although our text would seem to invite discourse on the duties of priests rather than on those of the people, we have dwelt upon the latter, because it is the people we are addressing and not priests. Besides, they are already familiar with their duties, and it is not ours to instruct them. Yet it will be proper to say something on the duties of pastors that the faithful may have some conception of them and learn the exalted dignity of the priesthood, that they may themselves all the better discharge their own duties as members of the flock.

First, then the people should understand what the dignity and excellence of the priestly or pastoral office is. It is such as that a more exalted cannot be conceived. For priests are the ambassadors of God, the interpreters and teachers in His name of the Divine law and the rules of Christian life, and represent God Himself on earth. Wherefore they are worthily called not only angels, but God's even: this of course because in their office among us they hold the power and act and speak in the name of the immortal God.

Lofty as the priestly office always in times past was, yet the priests of the New Testament excel all others in honor. And this because of the sublime power of consecrating and offering the Body and Blood of the Lord, and of forgiving sins in God's name, and of announcing the truths of eternal life, and of conferring the Sacraments—the channels of Divine grace to the souls of men: duties such as

these would become angels rather than mortals.

As Christ was sent by the eternal Father, the Apostles and priests after them were sent by Christ. For priests are sent with the same power as they "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv; 22). Such an office is not to be rashly undertaken, or laid upon anyone; but only those are called to it who by holiness of life, learning, faith and prudence are able to bear it. "Nor let anyone take this office to himself, but he who is called of God, as Aaron," says the Apostle (Heb. v; 4).

Integrity of life and innocence of manners, and freedom from sin and attachment to virtue should be the essential marks and primary qualifications of a priest, as he who is to be the light and guide of virtue and innocence to others. He who without all this enters this holy state involves himself in extreme wickedness and most fatal peril. The deformities of body which in the Old Law, and to some extent in the New, exclude from the sacred ministry, should be especially applied to moral deformity, or maladies of the mind and soul.

In the priest it is imperatively required that he have that knowledge which his duties so necessarily call for. Not alone that which the proper making and administration of the Sacraments requires, but familiarity with the Sacred Scriptures and the truths of Revelation, and the precepts of the Divine law, that he may be able to teach the people, and to reclaim them from vice, and stimulate them to virtue and piety, and to do all things else necessary to

their salvation. "The priest's lips preserve knowledge, and they require the law from his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts," says the prophet Malachy. The ministry of the Sacraments may require less learning: yet the ministry of the word and teaching requires a choice and abundant learning. Certainly the highest degree of recondite knowledge is not required in all priests: only that which is sufficient for the proper discharge of his own assigned duty.

They who, uncalled of God, rashly and arrogantly intrude themselves into the Priesthood, are the hirelings and mercenaries spoken of by Christ in our text. Of them the Lord spoke when He said, "I sent not the prophets, and yet they ran." Than such intruders no men can be more unhappy, and none the more fruitful cause of scandal and misery and calamity to the Church of God.

No one should enter the Priesthood with an intention unworthy of this sublime office. What end is proposed will in great measure determine his ministry to be blessed or cursed. Alas, how many now and always enter from unworthy purposes! Hence the bad priests so frequent in every age, and the vocations stranded on every shore! Hence the never-ceasing scandals from Judas to the latest successors of Judas, who have betrayed their vows, the victims of drunkenness or impurity or sordid avarice: God grant that these scandals may grow few. But how expect it; for "scandals must needs be, yet woe to them by whom they cometh." Better a thousand times that the unworthy, as Christ said of Judas, "had been never born." I need not stop to

enumerate the evil intentions with which men are often found to have entered the holy Priesthood. Nor need I dwell upon the holy purposes and divine motives that should actuate and influence the hearts of all who enter it as they should. The last class the Priesthood sanctifies and saves; the former draw from it what Judas drew from his Apostleship—everlasting destruction and irrecoverable malediction.

There is an internal priesthood, to which all you who have been washed in Baptism belong, consecrated by the Holy Ghost; but particularly you the just who have the Spirit of God, and by Divine grace are made living members of the High Priest Christ Jesus. Be ye faithful to your priesthood; carp not at others while your own hearts are desecrated by sin, and your hands, polluted by contact with the world, are never raised in prayer and benediction and holy sacrifices. For you, by faith inflamed with charity, should offer to God spiritual sacrifices upon the altars of your souls. Such are to be accounted all the good and holy deeds and actions which you do for the glory of God.

“Ye are a royal priesthood, a chosen people,” says the Apostle. Christ has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom and priests to our God and His Father, says the Apocalypse. “Ye, as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ,” says St. Peter. And the Apostle St. Paul exhorts us, “that we yield our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as being our reasonable service.” All this refers to the internal priesthood in which you are consecrated.

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

SORROW TURNED INTO JOY.

“ Truly, truly, I say to you, that ye shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.”—St. John xvi; 20.

THE words of this text point out what is so obvious in human life and particularly familiar to directors of consciences: that the just are frequently and painfully tried by temptation, while the wicked seem to have no knowledge of it as such. Of course the reason is very obvious. The devil does not attack those who by sin are already his: he does not waste his ammunition. Or, the sinner yielding to sin the moment it presents itself, is not conscious of any struggle, and, therefore, has no temptation properly such. While the just man, because of his innocence, and resistance to sin, becomes the legitimate object of the devil's assaults, and grows apprehensive at the approach of sin. “ When thou comest to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation,” is the warning of Holy Scripture.

All the temptations to which we are exposed come from the flesh, the world, and the devil. And varied are the open and insidious perils that arise from each. Here the prince of the Apostles declaring, that though all should deny the Master, yet,

even if he were to die with Him, he never would ; and in a few hours denying with oaths at the sound of a maid's voice that he knew the Lord. What weakness ! His strength was not equal to his willingness. " The spirit indeed was willing but the flesh weak." If holy men have sinned grievously through weakness, how should those who fall far short of them fear and tremble ? Trust not in yourselves but trust in the Lord and shun occasions that may be ruinous to your weakness. How few are they who must not in truth confess the damage which their souls have sustained from anger, lust, covetousness ! The assaults and incitements of these passions inflict upon most men grievous wounds. Stained, or scorched, or bruised, or ensnared by such passions, is the tale of every sinner.

Besides these enemies which dwell within us, and are never absent from us, there are those malignant foes with whom " we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of this world of darkness, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things." The outward enemies join hands with our evil propensities ; they seek to entrap by open force and secret snares. It is only by steady watchfulness and resolute care and unfailing grace that we can make issue with their assaults and escape unscathed.

Various are the hidden plots and subtle and insidious processes and the carnal and spiritual agencies and malicious influences and formidable engines of destruction that these spirits, called the princes of this world, employ to compass the ruin of souls and deprive them of their heavenly inheritance.

Learn for your safety that their force is great, their courage undaunted, their hate of us cruel and infinite, that they wage a perpetual war, that there can be no peace or truce with them. "Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour." "I will ascend even up to heaven," is the bold word of Satan, which we read in the prophet. He set upon and entrapped our parents in paradise; he resisted the prophets; he assailed the Apostles and would have "winnowed them as wheat"; he would fain tempt the Son of God Himself. Nor does he work alone; but many are sometimes banded together against one man. "My name is legion"; that is, a multitude of devils, was the answer the devil gave to Christ, by Whom he had been cast out of a miserable man. And it is written of another, "That he took with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwelt there."

There are many indeed who have not had this experience of the devil and his assaults; and, therefore, conclude that there is no such matter. What wonder can there be that they are not opposed by the devil, who freely and long since and may be life-long have given themselves up to him? They have no piety, no charity, no Christian virtue, or if they have a semblance of these, it is but a semblance or counterfeit imitation. Being wholly in his power, his abject and willing slaves, there is no need of temptation to destroy them: their souls belong to him by every right and title that they could surrender to him.

But those who have devoted themselves to God,

leading heavenly lives while on earth—these he assails, these he hates, for these at all times he lays snares. Behold the holy men and women in all ages who, although at one time holy in God's sight, were inveigled by his stratagems or fell victims before his deadly assaults! The victims of his force or frauds will never be known till the day of reckoning. Human wisdom and strength cannot resist him. No one should deem himself safe in his own protection, thinking weakness strength. The evil one cannot assail us beyond that time or limit which God allows. Wherefore it should be our daily prayer, that "He would not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will even make with temptation an issue, that ye may be able to bear it."

We do not ask that we may not be tempted at all. For in the providence of God the life of man on earth must be a continual warfare. Temptations must prove us at every point that we may be judged worthy of eternal life. Temptations show us our strength or our weakness: for the one we are moved to give God thanks and glory to His grace; for the other we are humbled under His mighty hand. If we comfort ourselves as soldiers of a crucified Lord, we shall be crowned with glory. "For he that wrestles is not crowned unless he wrestle lawfully" (II Tim. xxv). "Blessed is the man that endures temptation, because when he shall have been tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which God has promised to them that love Him" (Jas. i; 12).

We pray that we may not be wanting in God's grace in order not to yield to, or be deceived or overtaken by temptations; and that His help may be

with us in all trials and afflictions to comfort and strengthen us, and inspire us with hope and confidence lest we give way to despair.

Remember the words of the text—the world, that is, sinners who may have no experience of temptation, will rejoice in their sinful ignorance; but you who are tried by temptation will be saddened; yet in due season your sadness will be turned to joy, and their joy to bitter anguish. Faithful souls are made sad with the labor and struggles to overcome temptation and the unceasing warfare of passion and the devil, until their souls are born into eternal life; they will then no longer remember their pains and distress for the supreme bliss and eternal joy which they shall possess. The assured hope and promise of this future consolation and everlasting reward should animate and sustain you under all tribulations and trials.

How unparalleled the honor, how unutterable the consolation of the just, when they shall hear themselves addressed by the Lord Himself, not as servants, but as friends and brothers and sons! No longer children of men, but children of the Most High God! “Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you.” Will they not deservedly exclaim: “Thy friends, O God! are too much honored.” They will also be highly extolled and their fidelity praised by Christ before His Heavenly Father and the assembled blessed Spirits. For “He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father Who is in heaven.” If the human heart craves to be honored by the wise and virtuous, as the surest discerners of merit, how

the glory of the elect shall be augmented when they behold themselves honored and venerated by one another!

We cannot even remotely conceive or imagine all the delights that shall fill the souls of the elect and augment to overflowing their bliss and glory; to reckon even those that we know would be endless. Whatever be our happiness in this life, or that can be desired either for the knowledge of the mind or the perfect disposition of the body, shall fill to repletion the blessed life of the saints in heaven; and all this done in a manner and measure higher and greater than "eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived," as the Apostle declares.

The body, gross and material in this life, divested of mortality and become rarified and spiritualized, shall no longer need corporal sustenance. The soul shall be filled beyond measure and further desire, even to perfect content and utmost repletion, with the inexhaustible food of glory which the presence of the Master of the eternal banquet will dispense to all. Not with earthly raiment, though costly as wealth could procure or royal robes though more glorious than those of Solomon or more gorgeous than oriental imagery can picture, shall the body be invested, but radiant with light and immortality and crowned with unfading glory.

Men generally think that for their comfort and content a large and stately mansion or a spacious and magnificent palace is required, though span of their tenure extend not beyond at most a few years; what can be imagined larger or more stately than

that house, not made by human hands, in which there are many mansions, illuminated throughout with the brightness of the Godhead and the glory of the Lamb! The prophet, transported with the beauty of this mansion, burned with the desire of reaching it, and exclaimed: How lovely are Thy tabernacles! My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and flesh have greatly rejoiced in the living God. And this should be the heartfelt wish of all, and the words of the prophet the common prayer of all.

If then you would turn the sadness of this life into joy in the next, and thus make your own the reward implied in our text, seek these tabernacles of bliss and everlasting rest. With faith and charity and persevering prayer, and fruitful use of the Sacraments, in deeds of well-doing towards your neighbors, by living soberly, justly and uprightly, in fear alone of God, you will by His mercy who has prepared it, come to possess this blessed rest and immortal glory—remembering, however, that “He who sows sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows in blessings, shall reap also of blessings” (II Cor. ix; 6).

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE HOLY GHOST.

*“But I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send Him to you.”—*St. John xvi; 7.

THE Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is equally God with the Father and the Son: consubstantial and coeternal and co-equal; equally almighty, perfect, good, wise, being of the same nature, and the same Lord and God as they are. This is the meaning of these words as used sometimes in the Old Testament and often in the New. David prays: “And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” In the Book of Wisdom we read: “Who has known thy counsel, except Thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above?” Also we read that “He created her in the Holy Ghost.” And in the New Testament, we are commanded to be baptized “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Also we read that the holy Virgin “conceived of the Holy Ghost.” And we are sent by St. John to Christ, Who baptizes us with the Holy Ghost. The same signification is given to this appellation in many other places.

As these words Holy Spirit may be applied rightly to Father, or Son, or angel, or souls of the just, for they are all spirits and all holy, we must not be led into error by the ambiguity of a common name being applied to a proper person. We give to the Father a proper name, and to the Son, but not to the Holy Ghost; because we have no name that can at all express the production of the Third Person, as nature supplies us with no illustration, as it does with the Father and the Son; and it is only from what we know that we can find proper names for the Divine Persons. The eternal birth of the Son of the Father is called generation; the production of the Holy Ghost is called spiration, or procession from the Father and the Son.

That the Holy Ghost is thus God is plainly taught in Holy Scripture. When St. Peter says to Ananias, "Why has Satan tempted thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" he at once adds, "Thou hast not lied to men, but to God; thus in the same breath calling the Holy Ghost God. And the Apostle to the Corinthians declares Him to be the Holy Ghost, Whom He had already called God: "There are diversities of operations, but the same God, Who works all in all; . . . but all these things the one and the same Spirit works, dividing to every one severally as He wills" (I Cor. xii; 6. That which the prophets had ascribed to God, the Apostle ascribes to the Holy Ghost. Isaiah had said: "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send? and he said to me: Go thou, and say to this people: Hearing hear, and understand not: and see, and know not. Harden the heart of this people, and

make heavy their ears, and close up their eyes; lest haply they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears." Upon these words the Apostle says, "Well did the Holy Ghost speak by Isaiah the prophet" (Acts xxviii; 25). As we are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we must believe that the Three being put on the same equality, and accorded the same honor and authority, are equally God.—All the more as to be baptized in the name of a creature or of any one less than God can avail naught. "Were ye," asks St. Paul, "baptized in the name of Paul," upbraiding the Corinthians for their pretention to be followers, some of himself, and some of Apollos and other teachers; and implying that they were all baptized in the name of the living God, and not in the name of Paul or of any other creature: and that such baptism could not profit them to salvation. St. John tells us that "There are three who bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." We give "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." Whatever faith ascribes to God; the Holy Scriptures teach, belongs equally to the Holy Ghost. To Him they attribute the honor of temples: "Know ye not that your members are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Also the work of sanctification, of life-giving, to search into the depths of God, to speak by the prophets, and to be present everywhere, all which obviously belong to the Godhead alone, belong to the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is God, so as to be the Third Person in the Divine Nature, distinct from the

Father and the Son, and produced by their will. The form of Baptism plainly shows that the Holy Ghost is the Third Person, self-existent in the Divine Nature, and distinct from the others. This also the Apostle teaches: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." Even more openly is this truth declared in the First Council of Constantinople: "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, and the Son: Who together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the prophets." Declaring the Holy Ghost to be the Lord, they declare how far He excels the angels, who are most perfect creatures created by God; for "they are all ministering spirits," says the Apostle, "sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation."

The soul united with God lives a truer life, as it is certainly a diviner life, than does the body when animated and sustained by its union with the soul. As the Holy Ghost is the Author of this divine union of the soul with God, which constitutes its life, the Holy Spirit is truly called the Giver of life or quickening Spirit.

The Holy Ghost, by eternal procession, proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one principle. For this matter of faith is confirmed by the Holy Scriptures and the Councils. It is plain from different passages: Christ our Lord, speaking of the Holy Ghost, said: "He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine." Also, in Scripture the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the Spirit of Christ,

sometimes the Spirit of the Father; one time He is said to be sent by the Father, another time by the Son, thus plainly signifying that He proceeds equally from the Father and the Son. "He that has not the Spirit of Christ," says St. Paul, "is none of His." And he calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Christ: "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." In St. Matthew He is called the Spirit of the Father: "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father." And Christ said: "The Paraclete whom I will send to you, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me." That the Holy Ghost should be sent by the Father, He declares: "Whom the Father will send in My name." From all these passages we draw the necessary conclusion, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

There are certain wonderful effects and bountiful gifts which spring and emanate from the Divine Spirit, as from the everlasting fount of all good. Though the extrinsic works of the Holy Trinity are the common or joint work of the Three Persons; yet those that issue from the infinite goodness and love of God are ascribed to the Holy Ghost as the Personal love of the Godhead, because proceeding from the Divine Will inflamed with love.

Whatsoever good things or benefits are bestowed upon us by God, for "what have we which we have not received from Him," have been given us by the kind and free bounty and gift of this Divine Spirit; Who for this reason is called a Gift and the Giver of good gifts. To Him is also attributed the creation

of the world, the giving of life: "I will give you spirit, and ye shall live," says Ezekiel; the governance and diffusion of all created things, and, above all, the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation; for it was by His mysterious power that the Eternal Word was made incarnate in Mary's womb. Here are matters for heartfelt gratitude and open and sincere acknowledgment.

As we rightfully distinguish the Creator from what He creates, we are to distinguish between this Divine Person and His effects or works. For sometimes His name is given to what are properly His gifts: hence we are to discern, when in Scripture the Holy Spirit is mentioned, whether the Divine Spirit Himself is spoken of, or His gifts and operations. The gifts are chiefly the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord. From these gifts of the Divine Spirit we learn the principles of Christian life, and come to know whether He abides in us.

Above and beyond all His gifts, Divine as they are, is that grace to be esteemed, called justifying grace, because it justifies or renders us holy in God's sight and "signs us with the holy Spirit of promise, Who is the pledge of our inheritance": it joins our souls to God in the closest love; whence, being inflamed with ardent piety, we begin a new life, and made partakers of the Divine Nature, we are called, and are truly made, the children of God.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

ON PRAYER.

“ Truly, truly, I say to you: if ye ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.”—St. John xvi; 23.

AMONG the chiefest duties of a Christian is that of prayer: he is essentially from his profession a man of prayer. Hence the way and efficacy of prayer should be familiar to him; he should understand for what things, and at what times, and how he should pray to God.

No one can be ignorant of these things who has learned by heart and pondered the meaning of that divine model of prayer which Christ has given us, called the Lord's Prayer, and who has heard His words that “ we should always pray, and never fail ” in this sovereign duty, and that we should always pray in His name: “ Hitherto ye have not asked anything in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

The duty of prayer is not one of mere counsel; it is of express command and obligation. This is declared by Christ in the words of St. Luke: “ We ought always to pray ” (viii). Being admonished by saving precepts and taught by divine ordinance, we dare to say “ Our Father Who art in heaven ” is

the preliminary in the Mass to the saying of this divine prayer which the Son of God taught the disciples when they asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray"; thus giving them assured hope of obtaining what they should pray for. And He put His own precepts in practice by His continual prayer, and by spending whole nights in prayer, and by retiring to the desert where He passed forty days and nights in prayer and fasting. Thus would He impress upon His followers for all time this sublime duty. And the lesson was not lost upon His Apostles: they always inculcated this duty upon all who embraced the faith, and instructed them as to the necessity of prayer for salvation; so that it has come to be recognized everywhere as the paramount duty of Christians, and as the necessary preparation for the worthy reception of the Sacraments, and the fruitful performance of acts of worship and sacrifice.

Prayer obtains for us all that we need for soul and body. God is the Sovereign Lord of all things. He owes nothing to anybody. Whence He is to be importuned for all our corporal and spiritual wants. God could give us all that we need for body and soul, and in the greatest abundance, before we ask Him, for our "heavenly Father knows what is needful for us," as He gives life and what is necessary to its sustenance, to creatures void of reason, and supports even inanimate nature; but He is pleased to be called upon and besought by His rational creatures: He is honored by this prayerful homage, and the confidence in His goodness which daily prayer inspires and expresses: He will reward

it and testify His bounty and good will towards us by bestowing upon us what we pray for, or what He sees we more greatly need. He has ordained prayer as the instrument by which we may declare our wants and obtain all that may be necessary to us. "If we but seek the kingdom of God and His justice," we may rest assured that "all things else will be added."

There are spiritual things required for salvation that can be received only through prayer. For there are devils and temptations that can be overcome only by prayer and fasting. Hence those deprive themselves of a fruitful source of many excellent gifts, and a most potent instrument of grace, who fail to employ, or are remiss in the practice of assiduous and devout prayer. For it is not enough that we pray: prayer should be accompanied with the due disposition: attention, earnestness, humility, confidence and perseverance.

By the honor we render to God in prayer, we acknowledge our subjection to Him, Whom we own and confess to be the Author of all good, in Whom alone we seek refuge and protection, safety and salvation. Of this we are warned in the XXXIXth Psalm: "Call upon Me in the day of tribulation, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honor Me."

"Prayer," says St. Augustine, "is the key of heaven: for prayer ascends, and God's mercy descends; though the earth be low, and heaven high, yet God hears the voice of man." God cannot be deaf to nor refuse to grant the prayers of His rational and noblest creature for what may be necessary to its eternal salvation. All things else should

be sought in relation thereto; for one thing alone is necessary; this is the better part which everyone should seek.

By prayer we receive into our souls the fullness of heavenly gifts: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," says our Lord in St. John, xvi; 24. For in answer to prayer comes the Holy Ghost into us to be our Guide and our Helper, to secure and preserve our faith, to escape punishment, to protect us in temptation, and to ensure our victory over the devil. By prayer we increase our virtues, especially faith. For as they that have not faith in God cannot pray aright—"for how can they call upon Him, in whom they have not believed"—so, according to the fervor and earnestness of prayer, the deeper and more assured becomes faith in Divine care and providence; and to this we the more readily abandon ourselves with all confidence, and ask and hope from His goodness all that we stand in need of. For He does not wait for the cries of the poor, who trust in Him, but goes forward and anticipates their inward and silent cravings and wants.

Prayer augments our charity. For owning Him to be the Author of all good, we are led to embrace Him with the greatest love; for good is the inspiration and motive of love; and love is measured by the good which it apprehends. As conversation with those we love increases our love or intensifies it to a higher pitch; so frequent communion with God by prayer and importuning His goodness fills the soul with joy and consolation, and impels it to more burning love and profounder worship.

There can be no doubt of the unfailing efficacy of prayer. The word of Christ is pledged for it. "Whatever ye shall ask in prayer without fainting, that ye shall obtain"; "Whatever ye shall ask the Father in My name, that He will give unto you"; "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"; "Whenever two or more are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." And the prophet Isaiah declares: "For then thou shalt call, and the Lord shall hear; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am"; and again: "It shall be, that before they cry, I will hearken; and while they yet speak, I will hear."

And yet it often happens that we do not obtain what we pray for. This happens either because what we ask is neither necessary nor profitable, but even hurtful to us; or because God confers upon us greater and choicer benefits; it may be the greatest mercy He can show us to deny what we sometimes may ask. And at times also we fail to obtain what we ask, because of the careless and negligent way in which we ask it, so much so that we scarcely regard or consider what we say.

So far from failing to obtain what we carefully and diligently pray for, we obtain even more. The prodigal would have thought himself well treated if he had been made one of his father's hired servants, instead of the princely and splendid entertainment that awaited him. God bestows His gifts upon those that ask them, and that in abundance, and even speedily; but all this, in His own way and according to His sovereign wisdom. For He knows

best how to order all things to our salvation and His own glory.

“You pray, and you receive not, because you pray amiss,” says St. James. Assuredly that lip service, in which we think neither of God nor of what we say, is but an empty pretence of prayer; and, far from pleasing God or bringing upon us blessing, is calculated to offend Him, and bring upon us His anger and malediction. Since prayer is essentially an elevation of the soul to God, if we allow our minds to be carried away in wilful distraction or things foreign to prayer, and without recollection or devotion or thinking of what we utter, how can we call this prayer or communion with God? What is it but pharisaical cant or unmeaning or empty noise? Such a manner of prayer by its negligence and ignorance evinces that we are not in earnest, or even unwilling to obtain what we pray for, or else that we pray for that which would hurt us; hence it is not to be wondered at that God does not grant what we ask in such a manner.

The soul, aflame and purified and expanded by the diligence and desire which prayer inspires, is rendered worthy of those blessings which before it was incapable of receiving because of its dryness and narrowness. We should always bear in mind that, unassisted by divine grace, we can of ourselves do nothing; and therefore, should with our whole hearts give ourselves to prayer. The flesh, the world, and the devil, our inveterate foes, are most effectually and surely overcome by the arms which prayer secures and keeps at hand. With downright proclivity to evil and the cravings of lust by the

corruption of our hearts, prayer conceives and presents to our thoughts God Himself; that, while we may pray and beseech Him to make us worthy of His gifts and graces, we may be inspired with the love of innocence, and cleanse ourselves from all guilt by the destruction of sin, and the cutting away of its occasions. The presence of God in our souls must always be a dissuasion from sin and an incentive to virtue. For, who could sin if he but felt the nearness, and observed the eye of the ever-present and omnipresent Creator and Redeemer.

ASCENSION THURSDAY.

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

“And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.”—St. Mark xvi; 19.

WHEN David the prophet, full of the spirit of God, contemplated the blessed and glorious Ascension of the Lord, he summons all to celebrate that triumph with the greatest joy and gladness in the words: “O clap your hands all ye nations; shout unto God with the voice of joy: the Lord is ascended with jubilee.” Not only by faith and perception of mind should we seek to realize this mystery, but, as far as possible, with the help of God we should study to express or reflect it in our deeds and manner of life. When the mystery of our Redemption was accomplished, Christ as man, body and soul, ascended into heaven. For as God He was never absent from it, inasmuch as He with His Divinity fills all places.

He ascended by His own power, not by the power of another, as Elias in a fiery chariot was raised into heaven, or as Habacue the prophet or Philip the deacon, who were carried through the air by Divine power and passed through remote regions of the earth. Nor was it only by the Almighty power of His Godhead, but also by His power as

man, that He ascended into heaven. For although it could not be done by the strength of nature, yet the virtue with which the Blessed Soul of Christ was endowed, could move the body as it wished; the body, which was already glorified, easily obeyed the wish of the soul commanding. And in this way, as God and as man, Christ by His own power went up into heaven.

Christ is said to sit at the right hand of God the Father. Which is a way borrowed from human things and ideas of expressing the glory of Christ, which as man, beyond all others, He attained. For among men to sit at the right hand is the place of greatest honor. These illustrations, the best we can employ, show the poverty of human things to declare divine. For, God being a Spirit, there can be nothing composite in Him. To sit, then, at God the Father's right hand does not signify situation and figure of body, but the firm and lasting possession of royal and supreme power and glory which He has received from the Father; of which the Apostle says: "Raising Him up from the dead, and placing Him at His right hand in the heavens, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and domination, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in the world to come; and He has subjected all things under His feet." From which words it appears that this glory is so proper and peculiar to our Lord that it cannot belong to any other created nature. Wherefore the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews testifies: "To which of the angels has He at any time said: Sit thou at My right hand."

All the other mysteries of Christ's life are to be referred to the Ascension as their end, and in it the completion and perfection of all is contained. For, as all the mysteries of our religion began with the Incarnation of the Lord, so with the Ascension His pilgrimage on earth is concluded. Besides, other articles of the Creed, which relate to Christ our Lord, manifest His profound humility and abasement; for nothing more abject or lowly can be imagined, than that the Son of God for us should assume human nature and weakness, and should will to suffer and die. Yet now, nothing more admirable or magnificent, for setting forth His sovereign glory and divine majesty, can be uttered, than that He rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sits now at the right hand of God the Father.

Christ ascended into heaven because the place of this earthly and obscure habitation was not suitable to His body, which in His resurrection had been gifted with the glory of immortality: the loftiest and most splendid dwelling of heaven could be His only fit abode.

Not alone that He might possess the throne of His glory and kingdom, which He had merited with His blood, did He ascend; but also to provide those things which concerned our salvation. He would prove in very truth that His kingdom was not of this world; for the kingdoms of this world are earthly and flitting, and rest upon physical resources and carnal power. But the kingdom of Christ is not that earthly one which the Jews expected, but spiritual and eternal; also that its re-

sources and riches are spiritual, he showed when He placed His seat in heaven. In which kingdom indeed they are to be esteemed the richer and the more flowing with a plenty of all good gifts, who the more diligently seek the things which are of God. For St. James testifies that God has elected "the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which God has promised to those loving Him."

And this also did Christ, by ascending into heaven, wish to bring about, that we should follow Him ascending, in thought and desire. For, even as by His death and resurrection He had left us an example of dying and rising in spirit; so by His ascension He teaches and shows us that, while dwelling on earth, we should betake ourselves to heaven in thought; "Confessing ourselves to be but pilgrims and strangers on the earth and seeking our own country, fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God; for our conversation," as the same Apostle says, "is in heaven."

And assuredly if Christ our Lord were dwelling on earth, all our thought would be fixed upon the very appearance of the man and our acquaintance with him; and we would look upon Him only as one who could confer upon us great benefits, and we should revere Him with a certain earthly good will. But, ascending into heaven, He has rendered our love spiritual, and brought it to pass that Whom we think of now as absent, Him as God we venerate and love. This we understand, partly, by the example of the Apostles, who, while the Lord was present with them, seemed to judge of Him with a

sense almost human; and, partly, by the testimony of the Lord Himself, it is confirmed when He says: "It is expedient for you, that I go." For that imperfect love with which they loved Christ Jesus when present with them was to be perfected by divine love, and this, by the coming of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, He at once adds: "For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you."

Now the force and magnitude of the unutterable good things, which the goodness of God has poured upon us, the prophet David, according to the interpretation of the Apostle, had long before sung in these words: "Ascending on high He led captivity captive; He hath given gifts to men"; for, on the tenth day, He gave the Holy Ghost, by Whose virtue and fruitfulness He filled the multitude of the faithful present, and truly discharged that magnificent promise: "It is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

He ascended into heaven also, according to the statement of the Apostle, "that He might now appear in the presence of God for us," and before the Father discharge the duty of an advocate. "My little children," says St. John, "I write these things to you, that you may not sin, but if anyone sin, we have an advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and He is the propitiation for our sins." Nor is there anything from which the faithful should derive greater joy and delight of mind, than that Jesus Christ is constituted the patron of our cause and the intercessor of our salvation, Whose

favor and authority with the Eternal Father is supreme.

Finally, Jesus Christ, entering into possession of His heavenly glory, has prepared a place for us, and in the name and as the Head of us all. For going into heaven, He threw open the gates which had been closed by Adam's sin, and cleared the way for us, by which we might arrive at eternal beatitude; as He had foretold to His disciples at the last supper He would do. Which, that the issue of the matter might openly evince, He introduced with Him into the home of everlasting bliss the souls of the just whom He had rescued from Limbo.

The Ascension of Christ added the greatest augment to the merit of our faith; for faith concerns those things which do not fall under our sight, and are removed from the reason and understanding of men. Wherefore, if the Lord had not departed from us, the merit of our faith would be diminished; for they are declared by Christ our Lord to be blessed "who have not seen, and yet have believed."

Besides, Christ's Ascension into heaven has great weight to strengthen hope in our hearts. For since Christ as man ascended into heaven, and has placed human nature at the right hand of God the Father, we are in great hope, it will be that we also, His members, may ascend thither, and be joined with our Head. Which the Lord Himself testifies in these words: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me." Then this also even supreme benefit we have gained, that He has ravished our love to heaven, and inflamed it with the Divine Spirit; for most truly

has He said: "There is our heart, where our treasure is."

Finally, what we have before taught concerning the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, the same also is to be thought by the faithful concerning His Ascension. For although we owe our salvation and redemption to the passion of Christ, Who by His merit opened to the just an entrance to heaven; yet His Ascension is proposed to us not only as an example, by which we learn to look on high and in spirit to ascend to Heaven, but the divine virtue, by which we can accomplish it, is imparted.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

TRIALS, THE MARK OF DIVINE LOVE.

“ They will cast you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whoever killeth you, will think that he offereth homage to God.”—St. John xvi; 2.

No words could declare more clearly or more strongly the hostility that was ever to exist between the children of God, and the children of this world. So bitter and deep would be the rancor between them that it would blind the mind and pervert the conscience: “ Whoever killeth you, will think that he offereth homage to God.”

The trials and misfortunes and calamities of this life, the same as those which we suffer for Christ, are a great and manifest sign of Divine predilection. Those that we endure for the sake of Christ are sent to us by God as a token of His favor, and if met as they should be, will insure us everlasting happiness. The martyr for Christ enters heaven as the child just baptized; for all his sins are washed away in his blood; he is truly baptized in his blood. Other tribulations and persecutions, if received as coming from the hand of God, and endured with patience and fortitude, will merit for us the same reward. For the motive of our suffering in each case is the same—the good pleasure of God. It is immaterial

whether the trial be sent directly by Him, or arises only from circumstances. For it could not come at all except with His knowledge, and His agency is as discernible in what He permits as in what He ordains. When we accept it as the dispensation of His providence and conform ourselves to the Divine Will which it expresses, actually doing for God's sake what is commanded, we may expect the reward of him whom God would call by name to His service or to any act of sacrifice, as Paul, or Peter or the other Apostles.

The calamities of life, or what are supposed to be such, are mainly poverty and disgrace, persecution chiefly in its forms of calumny, contumely, misrepresentation; and sickness and suffering in their various degrees. And if there be any others, they are easily traceable to one or other of these as their source.

Now, so far from any of these miseries indicating the displeasure of God or the withdrawal of His Fatherly goodness or the reprobation of those suffering them, they are rather the plainest proofs of His special protection, the most signal signs of their predestination.

For what is more calculated to detach us from this world, to purify the soul, to cherish self-denial, to remove all obstacles that bar our way, to destroy all enemies that oppose our entrance into heaven, than poverty, and persecution, and suffering? The flesh, the world, the devil are our sworn enemies: they are routed and overcome by the spiritual arms of detachment from the world, suffering for justice's sake, and self sacrifice. Blessed indeed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What

temptations of avarice and sins of injustice are cut away at one fell swoop by this detachment. For cupidity is the source of all sin. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What divine praise and heavenly reward for those who love justice and hate iniquity, and espouse the cause of God, against the world. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven: for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." What consolation greater than this could the Lord of justice pour into the souls of those who wronged or calumniated by envy or malice; they are likened to the prophets, and their reward is declared great in heaven.

Indeed all the sins that can close heaven upon those who commit them, flow from the opposites of these virtues: from riches and prosperity, power and glory, impurity and luxury. The vices and sins engendered by these involve the soul in imminent risk of salvation. It is these that may be considered the marks of reprobation; while the opposite virtues are extraordinary signs of Divine love.

What do all the temporal advantages whose loss men account hardship and calamity, amount to? Yet a few years, when the rich and poor, the exalted and persecuted, the happy and afflicted, come to their last day, what profit then to have been rich and exalted and happy. The poor, the persecuted, the afflicted, if they have sanctified themselves by their trials, and sanctified their trials by patience, long-

suffering and fortitude, will realize that the Lord has been with them during life, and while He seemed to chastise them, only purged and purified their souls that they might be worthy to dwell in the mansions of bliss which He has prepared for those who love and serve Him. "Whom He predestined unto glory, He predestined to be made like unto the image of His Son." This assimilation is to be wrought through the tribulations and trials and afflictions which beset and waylay the just and Godfearing on every side during their mortal pilgrimage.

The greatest caution should be used by faithful souls, lest when visited by any misfortune or afflicted by any calamity, they think that God is unaware of it; for He says, that "a hair of your head shall not perish." Indeed, let them console themselves with the comfort of the divine oracle, which is mentioned in the Apocalypse: "I reprove and chastise those whom I love." Let them find rest in the exhortation of the Apostle to the Hebrews: "My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord; nor be wearied while you are reprov'd by Him: for whom the Lord loves, He chastises; He corrects every son whom He receives. For if you are beyond discipline, you are bastards and not sons. We have accounted the fathers of our flesh our teachers, and reverence them; shall we not much rather obey the Father of spirits, and we shall live?"

The consideration of all that we owe our most loving Father and God, should make us understand the love and piety, the obedience and veneration we should render Him as Creator, Ruler, and Redeemer,

and the hope and trust with which we should invoke Him. But, to instruct ignorance, and to correct the perverse opinion of those who think that only flourishing circumstances and a prosperous course of life can be proof that God cherishes His love for us, and that when we are tried by adversity and calamity it is because God is hostile to us and the Divine will alienated from us, we should diligently learn and thoroughly understand and keep in mind always, that when the hand of the Lord strikes us, the Lord does it not as an enemy, but by striking He cures, and the blow coming from God is medicine. He chastises those sinning, that with this discipline He may make them better, and by present chastisement rescue them from everlasting ruin. For He visits indeed our iniquities with a rod, and our sins with blows, but His mercy He does not take from us. Wherefore in chastisement of this kind, we should recognize the paternal charity of God, and have always in memory and in our mouth that saying of the most patient Job: "He wounds, and heals; He strikes, and His hand will make sound"; they should take to themselves, what Jeremias wrote in the person of the people of Israel: "Thou hast chastised me, and I am taught as an untamed heifer. Convert me, and I shall be converted: because Thou Lord art my God"; they should keep before them the example of Tobias, who, when he had felt the Fatherly hand of God striking in that plague of blindness, cried out: "I bless Thee, Lord God of Israel, because Thou hast chastised me, and Thou hast saved me."

Finally, we should know that if by our prayers

and vows we are not freed from evils, we should patiently endure those things that oppress us, understanding that it is the will of the Divine Being, that we suffer them with resignation. Wherefore, it is by no means just that we be indignant or pained, that God does not hear our prayers; but we should refer all things to His pleasure and good will; convinced, that that is useful, that salutary, that alone desirable, which pleases God, not that which seems convenient to us.

While in the course of this life, it is our duty to be prepared to bear every kind of misfortune and calamity not only with equanimity but with joy. "For all," says the Apostle, "who wish to live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution"; again: "Through many tribulations it behooves us to enter the Kingdom of God"; still again: "Did it not behoove Christ to suffer these things, and so enter into His glory?" For it is not just that the servant should be greater than his master; as it is disgraceful, according to St. Bernard, for members to be delicate under a thorn-crowned head. Excellent for our imitation is the example of Uriah, who, when David exhorted him to stay at home, said: "The Ark of God, and Israel, and Juda, dwell in tents, and shall I enter my house?"

If we come to pray, fortified with these reasons and meditations, it shall come to pass that, though begirt with threats on every side and encompassed with evils, we shall, as the three children in the fiery furnace, be preserved unscathed. Assuredly, as the Machabees, we are to bear calamities with constancy and fortitude. In contumelies and afflictions we

should imitate the holy Apostles, who, beaten with stripes, heartily rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer contumely for Christ Jesus. We, prepared in like manner, shall sing with greatest pleasure of mind those words: "Princes have persecuted me without cause; and my heart hath been in awe of thy words; I will rejoice at thy words, as one that hath found great spoil."

WHITSUNDAY.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

“ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”—
Acts ii; 4.

TO-DAY the Church celebrates the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. They were assembled in an upper chamber in Jerusalem awaiting His coming, as Christ had charged them to “tarry in the city till they should be endued with virtue from on high.” He had promised to “send them the Paraclete, who would teach them all truth, and abide with them forever.” “It was expedient for them that He should go, for if He did not go, the Paraclete would not come. But when He would go, He would send Him to them.”

The most immediate effect of the Holy Ghost's coming was that He confirmed them in the faith of Christ, and imparted to them the Sacrament of Confirmation with all the gifts and graces that go with it, and also the power of miracles and tongues and all else that they would need for the conversion of the world. In them He wrought a mighty transformation. The efficacy of this Sacrament is luminously seen in the change which it effected in them. For, before the passion of Christ, or toward the very hour of the passion, they were so weak and

faint-hearted, that, when the Lord was seized, they at once betook themselves to flight; Peter, who had been named the rock and foundation of the Church, who had shown the highest constancy and the greatness of a lofty mind, frightened at the voice of a silly woman, denied not once or again, but thrice, that he was a disciple of Jesus Christ; and after the Resurrection, all, because of fear of the Jews, kept themselves shut up at home. But on the day of Pentecost they were all filled with so great virtue of the Holy Ghost, that, while they boldly and freely planted the Gospel which had been entrusted to them, not only in the countries of the Jews but in the whole world, they were convinced that no happier or more desirable fortune could befall them than to be accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, disgrace, chains, torments and crucifixion.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is called by this name because when the baptized person to be confirmed is anointed by the bishop with holy chrism with the words, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," unless something hinders the efficiency of the Sacrament, he begins to be stronger with the strength of a new virtue, and accordingly a perfect soldier of Christ.

Nor is it true that the name Confirmation was derived from a custom, which is erroneously stated to have existed, that baptized infants, when grown to manhood, confirmed before the bishop the faith which in Baptism they had received; this would differ nothing from catechizing. Confirmation per-

fects the work begun in Baptism, matures the seed therein planted; hence the name.

Confirmation is one of the seven Sacraments, and, like the rest, instituted by Christ. The Church has always taught that all the essentials of a Sacrament are present in this of Confirmation. The sense of the Church on this subject is summed up in the words of St. Clement: "All must hasten without delay to be born again of God, and then to be signed by the bishop, that is, to receive the seven-fold grace of the Holy Ghost. Because he cannot be a perfect Christian who culpably and voluntarily, and not from necessity neglects this Sacrament, as we have learned from St. Peter; and the other Apostles by command of the Lord have handed down." And this truth successors of St. Peter, who have poured out their blood for Christ, have confirmed in their decrees. The holy Fathers of the Church are replete with testimonies to this Sacrament, and references to its details; speaking of the garments suitable to those to be confirmed, and the holy and truly divine ointment and words which the bishop employs in its conferring. And St. Augustine applies the words of the Psalm, "As the ointment on the head, which went down to the beard, even Aaron's beard," and also the words, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which is given us," to the Sacrament of Confirmation. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed"—words of the Apostle—St. Ambrose applies to this Holy Sacrament.

Although Confirmation and Baptism are closely allied, yet they are not the same Sacraments, but

very different. For it is evident that the variety of grace which the different Sacraments give, and of the sensible sign which signifies that grace, renders them also to be various and different Sacraments. The difference which in the natural life exists between birth and growth, is the difference between Baptism, which regenerates, and Confirmation, by whose virtue the faithful increase growth, and assume perfect strength of soul. Special needs call for special remedies. As Baptism is necessary to plant the faith in the soul, and restore to it the grace lost by original sin, so Confirmation is necessary to strengthen the soul, that it may never be deterred from the profession of this faith by fear or danger of any pains, or punishments, or even death; and that it may preserve the grace and friendship of God therein received, against the assaults of the flesh, the world and the devil. And as this preservative of faith and sanctifying grace is plainly a different thing from their reception, the Sacraments meant for these two purposes, must be different, although one is the complement of the other.

It is scarcely necessary to add so obvious a truth, that Christ, and He alone, is the Author of this Sacrament as of all the Sacraments; and that He instituted the rite of chrism and the words to be employed in its conferring by the bishop. For all the holy mysteries which dispense grace are beyond all human power or authority, and the manifest work of God Himself.

As every Sacrament is made up of the matter or element, and the form or words by which it is perfected, so in Confirmation we have the chrism, made

of oil and balsam solemnly consecrated by the bishop. The Church has always taught that this is the proper matter of this Sacrament; and the Fathers tell us that the Apostles received the composition of chrism from the Lord, and left it to us. Oil, which is unctious, and by its nature durable and fluid, expresses the fullness of grace which through the Holy Ghost from the Christ the Head overflows and is poured out on others, His members. Balsam, whose odor is most pleasant, signifies that those strengthened and perfected by this Sacrament diffuse such a sweetness of all virtues, that they can say with the Apostle, "We are the good odor of Christ unto God." Balsam also preserves from corruption whatever is anointed with it. Thus it signifies the virtue of the Sacrament in that, the souls furnished and fortified by the grace given in Confirmation are secured against the contagion of sin.

The form of a Sacrament is that which makes it what it is: it ought to contain all those things which declare its substance and nature. In the words of the form, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," are expressed the Divine power which, as principal cause, works in the Sacrament, and the strength of soul and spirit which is imparted for salvation, and the sign wherewith those to be confirmed are marked. While these words are uttered, especially should the recipients nourish in their souls piety, faith, and devotion, that there may be no hindrance to the heavenly grace.

Bishops alone have the ordinary power of conferring this Sacrament; they alone are its true and lawful ministers. For we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that when Samaria had received the word of God, "Peter and John were sent to them, who prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet He had not come upon any one of them, but they were baptized only." They who baptized, clearly had not the power to confirm; this was reserved to the Apostles, of whom the bishops are the legitimate successors. In building a house the crowning or perfecting work is kept for the architect; so the perfecting of the spiritual building, is the right of the chief priest or bishop.

God-parents are required for this Sacrament as in Baptism, that they may discharge kindred duties. Too much haste lest it be received too soon, or not religiously, or too much delay or negligence, lest the suitable time pass away, and even death come before its reception, are extremes equally to be carefully shunned.

Purity of conscience, freedom from at least mortal sin, is absolutely required for the lawful reception of this Sacrament; otherwise it were a sacrilege. Besides this, every one about to receive it should cleanse himself from venial sin, confess his sins, and stir himself with sentiments of faith, charity, and exercises of devotion. The admirable effects and gifts of this Sacrament certainly deserve this religious preparedness. Your home is embellished for the visit of an illustrious person or dear friend: who more honorable or loving than

this Divine Person who deigns to come upon you, the Giver of good gifts?

While salvation is attainable without this Sacrament, yet they who neglect so great a source of grace and sanctification to the Christian life, and so powerful an aid to salvation, through culpable neglect, cannot excuse themselves from mortal sin. The Church wishes that the work begun by regeneration in Baptism should be completed by the reception of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation. For this Sacrament belongs to all the faithful. Those who were present in the upper chamber in Jerusalem when the Holy Ghost came upon them, represented the whole body of the faithful: and the Holy Ghost descended upon all without exception. "And suddenly there came down from heaven, a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled the whole house. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Plainly, there is no room for exemption in so sovereign and divine a duty as that of sharing the gifts and graces of the Divine Paraclete in this holy Mystery; it is the equal duty of every one baptized in the faith of Christ.

We can but mention the effects of this holy Sacrament.

Confirmation, like all the other Sacraments, gives new grace, unless some obstacle exists on the part of the recipient. For it has all the sacred and mysterious signs which declare and work grace. Besides what is common to this and the other Sacraments, it is peculiar to Confirmation that it perfects the grace of Baptism. For those who have only received Baptism are yet newborn infants, tender

and soft, and by Confirmation are made more robust, and rendered able to resist the assaults of the flesh, the world, and the devil; and their souls are strengthened to confess the faith and glorify the name of Jesus Christ. By virtue of this Sacrament God confirms in us what He began to work in Baptism, and leads us to the perfection of solid Christian virtue. Nor does it confirm only, but increases, and that after a wonderful manner. "The Holy Spirit who with salutary descent comes upon the waters of Baptism, in the font gives fullness to innocence; in Confirmation He bestows increase to grace." The manner, the Scripture most beautifully signified and expressed by the figure of a garment: "Stay ye in the city until ye are clothed with virtue from on high," said our Lord and Redeemer, when He spoke to the Apostles of this Sacrament.

Finally, this Sacrament, like Baptism and Holy Orders, imprints a character, the effect of which is that, under no circumstances or for any consideration, can it be repeated. From the dignity and profitableness of this Sacrament, all should learn and be minded to receive it holily and religiously.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”—St. Matt. xxviii; 19.

THE correct import of a name conduces very much to understanding the nature of anything. Hence we say that the word “baptism” is a Greek word which means washing. In Holy Scripture it is applied to all other kinds of cleansing or washing and sometimes also to suffering, as well as to the washing which belongs to this Sacrament of Baptism. Yet in the literature of the Church its use is restricted to the washing which is joined to this Sacrament, and is not administered without the prescribed form of words: in this sense the Apostles, by the instruction of Christ, often used the word. At various times, and by different Fathers of the Church, the Sacrament has been called by other names; all, however, declaring its nature, its grace, and its divine effects in the soul.

No definition of this Sacrament can be more suitable and fit than that which our Lord’s own words supply: “Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”; and the Apostle speaks of the Church:

“Cleansing her in the laver of water in the word,” referring to Baptism: thus Baptism may be justly and aptly defined as “the Sacrament of regeneration by water in the word.” For through Adam in the order of nature, we are born children of wrath, but by Baptism we are born in Christ, children of grace. For, as St. John says: “He gave power to men to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

It should scarcely be necessary to say that the Sacrament of Baptism is not the water which is kept in the font, apart from the words which are the form of the Sacrament, nor the words apart from the water: the Sacrament exists only when the water, for the purpose of Baptism, is poured on the person to be baptized accompanied by the words instituted by our Lord: as St. Augustine remarks: “The word is added to the element, and thus the Sacrament is made.”

The matter of the Sacrament is any kind of natural water that, physically and in the common opinion of men, is considered simply water, without qualification. For the word of Christ is, “Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And the Apostle says, “that the Church is cleansed by the washing of water.” And St. John declares, “There are three that bear testimony on earth, the spirit, water, and the blood.” The inward working of the Holy Ghost in this Sacrament, not its matter or the wonders which He effected in the Apostles on Pente-

cost when He came upon them in the form of fire, are referred to by St. John the Baptist when he declared that the Lord was coming "Who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Of this last Christ had said: "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."

For a Sacrament so necessary to all, so purifying to the soul, so quenching of lusts, there could be no material so suitable as water, which is so easily had, which from its cleansing power expresses purity of soul, which from cooling the body signifies the slackening of lusts. Holy chrism is added, by which the effect of Baptism is better declared; this comes from Apostolic tradition.

The form of the Sacrament consists of these words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It was thus the Apostles were commissioned to baptize all men, when they were sent by Christ into the whole world. Here are declared the action done, the person upon whom it is done, the cause which effects the baptism, viz.: I baptize—thee, and the distinct names of the three Divine Persons. All three Persons work conjointly; in the "name," not "names," thereby signifying the unity of the Divine Nature, the substance, virtue, power, which is one and the same in all the Divine Persons.

Baptism was established by Christ when He was baptized in the Jordan, although it did not become of obligation till after His passion, from which, as the end of all Christ's actions, it took its virtue and efficacy. Christ Himself did not of course need

baptism; it was His Divine purity and holiness that cleansed the waters so that they have the power of cleansing and sanctifying, and begetting in us the spiritual life, which is union by grace with God. It was by the touch of His holy Body that the water was consecrated to the salutary use of Baptism, when He was baptized. How so transcendent a virtue was imparted to the waters is beyond comprehension. Yet it should excite no marvel when we remember that at that Baptism were present, as in every Baptism, the three Persons of the Trinity: for then and there was heard the voice of the Father, were seen in human flesh the Person of the Son with all His uncreated holiness, and the Holy Ghost in the likeness of a Dove; the effect of Baptism was signified by the "opened heavens."

From the time after the Resurrection when the Apostles received their commission to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," all who were to attain salvation were bound by the law of Baptism. This is implied in the words of the Apostle: "He gave Himself up for her (the Church), that He might sanctify her, cleansing her with the washing of water in the word." These words seem to refer the law of Baptism to the time just after our Lord's death. The words of this obligation, "Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," refer to the period subsequent to His passion. If we could behold with our bodily eyes the mysteries of Baptism, which we can contemplate only with the soul illuminated by faith, we would be

transported with the all-marvellousness of the riches and glories of this Divine Sacrament, and would reverence its excellent dignity and surpassing eminence, and long ardently for, and once received, anxiously guard and preserve the Divine and affluent gifts manifested at Christ's Baptism and on Pentecost, and yet to be bestowed by the secret influence of the Holy Ghost upon all who are baptized.

The Divine goodness which, because of the necessity of this Sacrament to all the children of men, has constituted water, than which nothing can be more easily had, the essential element of Baptism, is further seen in the unrestricted power which has been granted to all persons, man, woman, and child—Jew, infidel, heretic—of conferring this Sacrament: the only condition being that which the nature of the act essentially requires: the requisite water, the application of the right form, and the intention of doing what the Church wishes. However, this unrestricted power should be exercised according to order and inherent fitness. For some have this power from their office, such as priests and bishops; some exercise it from leave, as deacons; all others, only from press of circumstances when one who needs the Sacrament may otherwise die without it. And even in this last case a certain order of preference should be observed. A man should administer it rather than a woman; an ecclesiastic rather than a layman; no one should do it in presence of those whose office it is. Yet, this order need not be observed when the duty would fall upon one incompetent or unskilful rather than qualified. Persons should not baptize their own

children when it is at all possible to find others capable. Because the solemn ceremonies are of less necessity than the Sacrament, they are reserved to those who officially confer the Sacrament, and to the precincts of the Church, except when allowed by dispensation in homes.

By the most ancient usage of the Church, other ministers, called by various names but now known as Godfathers and mothers, are employed in this Sacrament. As the child just born into the world needs nurses and instructors for its bodily and mental wants, so the child spiritually reborn in this Mystery of regeneration needs, for the spiritual life which then begins, those who may instruct it in the precepts of the Christian faith and form it to the practice of piety and virtue. For, as St. Peter says, they "as new-born babes desire the sincere milk without guile" (I Pet. ii; 2).

Such is the negligence into which this office of spiritual guardianship has fallen, that but little more than the name survives, whilst few, if any, attend to the duty and sanctity it implies. And yet such sponsors are bound to safeguard and foster the soul interests of their spiritual offspring, and see to it that they are faithful to the promises which through them they uttered in Baptism. According to St. Dionysius the sponsor assuming this duty virtually promises "to train the child, when he shall come to the understanding of sacred things, with assiduous exhortations to renounce all things contrary to his profession, and to profess and perform the holy promises which he made." St. Augustine sums up the duties of sponsors thus: "They ought to ad-

monish them to observe chastity, to love justice, to preserve charity; and above all things they should teach them the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, the ten Commandments, and the first rudiments of the Christian religion."

In face of all this, the office of sponsor should not be assigned to those who can not or will not discharge it faithfully, wisely, and carefully. Such assuredly are heretics, Jews and infidels, and Catholics who themselves are not in their manner of life worthy of their Christian profession. Parents should not be sponsors for their own children, to mark the difference between this spiritual bringing up, and their carnal training; even as they should not baptize their own offspring. The one and the other the Church has interdicted by constituting them canonical impediments.

As parents are bound, under pain of incurring an impediment between themselves, not to baptize their own children, when it is at all possible to find anyone else to do it; so, in this Sacrament an impediment which voids marriage exists between the baptizer and the baptized, and between godparent and godchild and its parents; marriage is not forbidden between the godparents themselves, as some erroneously imagine.

II.

THE EFFECTS OF BAPTISM.

THAT you may realize the lofty rank as Christians to which you are raised by this holy Sacrament, as well as its inestimable benefits, we proceed to unfold to you some of its most signal effects; we shall dwell, and that necessarily very briefly, upon some of those that belong to the very essence of the Sacrament.

Baptism remits all sin, original, and actual if the recipient be guilty of any, although so enormous that it cannot even be imagined. This had been predicted by Ezekiel: "I will pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness." And the Apostle says: "And these things ye were, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified." Sin is utterly extirpated in the soul; because as the Council of Trent teaches: "God hates nothing in the regenerate, because there is no condemnation to those who are truly buried with Christ by Baptism unto death, who walk not according to the flesh; but putting off the old man, and putting on the new, who is created according to God, they are made innocent, spotless, pure, harmless, and loved of God."

Concupiscence, or inborn tendency to sin, which is not sin, which is from sin, is only an appetite of

the mind, of its nature repugnant to reason; which motive, however, if it be not conjoined with the consent of the will, or negligence, is far from the true nature of sin. It remains that, during life until death, there may not be wanting human infirmity, as a trial of our virtue and an occasion of merit, and that we may be made like unto Christ, our Head and model; Who assumed, and retained till death, the frailty of the nature which He took, although from His birth He had the fullness of grace. All the punishments due to sin are remitted in Baptism. The Apostle says that through Baptism we die, and are buried together with Christ. Hence works of satisfaction cannot be imposed upon those about to receive this Sacrament: such an infliction the Church has always understood would be an exceeding great injury to the Sacrament.

In Baptism we are filled with Divine grace whereby we are made just and children of God and heirs of eternal salvation. And grace is not only that which remits sins, but a Divine quality inherent in the soul; a splendor and light which irradiates the soul, destroying all its defilements, and rendering it more beautiful and glorious. Holy Scripture says that grace is poured out upon our souls, and calls this grace the pledge of the Holy Ghost.

To this follows a most noble train of all virtues, which with grace are divinely poured into the soul. Wherefore the Apostle says: "He has saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He has shed abundantly upon us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

By Baptism we are joined and knit to Christ as

members to the head. As the head supplies the force and spirit, which moves and directs the different parts of the body to their respective offices; so, also, the fullness of Christ diffuses Divine grace and virtue upon all who are justified, rendering us suitable and ready for all the duties of Christian piety.

Although we are thus provided and adorned with such an abundance of virtue in Baptism, yet we feel not a little difficulty and pain in the exercise of pious and moral actions. This is because even after Baptism there remains a severe struggle of the flesh against the spirit, not because those virtues from which pious actions spring have not been bestowed upon us by the Divine bounty; in this conflict, permitted for our trial and reward, it would, however, ill become a Christian to grow languid or be cast down; since, relying on the goodness of God, we should with excellent hope depend upon it, that, by the daily exercise of right living, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, the same may also appear easy and agreeable. These things let us willingly consider, these with a prompt and cheerful mind perform, that the God of peace may be with us.

Baptism imprints in the soul an indelible character which can never be erased. From the nature and force of this character, it has been declared by the Church that this Sacrament can never be repeated. And on this point no one should allow himself to be led into error. For "there is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." Besides, Baptism is a spiritual birth: as our natural birth cannot be repeated,

so likewise our spiritual rebirth. Nor is the Baptism renewed when conferred conditionally: for the word means that, if the Sacrament is already truly conferred, the second, given for security, does not take effect. And even this conditional repetition is not to be done rashly; nor unless after a prudent investigation, there remains a well-founded doubt as to the Sacrament's valid collation. Such a repetition would be a sacrilege, and so involves the baptizer in what is called an irregularity.

Besides the other things which we obtain from Baptism, as it were the last, and to which all the rest seem to be referred, is that it opens to every one of us the gates of heaven, before closed on account of sin. Now the things which are wrought in us by the virtue of Baptism can be plainly understood from those which the authority of the Gospel declares to have happened in the Baptism of our Lord and Saviour. For the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove appeared descending upon Him. From which it is signified to those who are baptized, that the gifts of the Divine Being are bestowed upon them, and Heaven's gates are opened; not indeed as soon as they are baptized, but at a more opportune time they may enter into that glory; when, freed from all miseries, which can have no place in that blessed life, instead of a mortal state, they shall attain immortality.

And these are truly the fruits of Baptism; which, if we view the virtue of the Sacrament, it cannot be doubted, equally belong to all; if, however, we consider with what soul and disposition each one approaching to receive it may be affected, it must

altogether be confessed that, more or less, heavenly grace and fruits come to one more than to another.

So great a Sacrament and the vehicle of such transcendent graces should not be administered, except in case of necessity, without becoming prayers, and rites, and ceremonies. Hence Holy Church, to ensure its dignity, and to guard against triteness or careless familiarity, and to inspire faith and devotion in those receiving it or witnessing its collation, has surrounded it with a majestic rite beseeeming its august character.

THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

“For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.”—St. John vi; 56.

EVEN as of all the holy mysteries which our Divine Saviour has commended to us as most certain instruments of Divine grace, there is none which can be compared to the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; so, also, no graver punishment of any crime is to be feared from God, than if that which is full of all holiness, or rather, which contains the very Author and Font of holiness, be neither holily nor religiously treated by the faithful. This the Apostle wisely saw, and openly admonished us about it. For, when he declared how enormous the guilt was of those who did not discern the body of Christ, he at once added: “Therefore among you are there many sick, and weak, and many sleep.”

“For since the Lord had loved His own, He loved them to the end”; of which love that He might give them some divine and admirable pledge, knowing that His hour had come, that He should pass from this world to the Father, lest ever at any time He should be absent from His own, with inexplicable wisdom He accomplished that which sur-

passes all the order and condition of nature. For, that the figure might give way to the truth, the shadow to the reality, He took bread, and giving thanks to God, blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: For this is My body, which shall be delivered for you: this do ye in commemoration of Me. In like manner He took the chalice, after He supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament in My blood. This do ye, as often as ye shall drink, in commemoration of Me."

There are three things signified to us by this Sacrament. The first is the passion of Christ our Lord: "As often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, ye shall show forth the death of the Lord until He come." Another is the Divine and heavenly grace which, being present, is given by this Sacrament to nurture and preserve the soul. Thirdly, it foreshows to come, the fruit of eternal delight and glory, which, according to the promise of God, we shall receive in our heavenly country.

The symbols of bread and wine in this Sacrament represent to us Christ, as the true life of men; for the Lord Himself says, "My flesh is truly food, and My blood is truly drink." Since therefore the body of Christ our Lord affords the nourishment unto eternal life to those who receive the Sacrament purely and holily, rightly is it made of those elements by which this life is sustained, in order that the faithful easily can understand that, by the communion of the body and blood of Christ, the mind and soul are satiated. Not a little, also, these very elements contribute, that men may receive the

knowledge, that in the Sacrament there is the truth of the body and blood of the Lord. For since we observe that bread and wine are changed into human flesh and blood daily by the force of nature, we can the more easily be led by this similitude to believe that the substance of bread and wine is changed by the Divine blessing into the true body of Christ, and His true blood.

Since the Apostle warns us that a most grievous crime is committed by those who do not discern the body of Christ, the minds of believers, as far as can be done, should be abstracted from the judgment of the senses, and incited to contemplate the immense virtue and power of God. For he who would persuade himself that that only is contained in the Sacrament which sense observes, necessarily must be led into the greatest impiety; since, perceiving by the eyes, the touch, the smell, the taste, nothing else except the species of bread and wine, they would judge that there is nothing only bread and wine in the Sacrament.

Faith teaches us that in this Sacrament is contained the true body of Christ, that very body which, born from the Virgin, in heaven sits at the right hand of the Father. Also, that in it there remains no substance of the elements, although nothing foreign to or remote from the senses can be seen. Also, what is an easy inference from these two, although the words of consecration express it principally, the accidents, which either are beheld by the eyes or perceived by the other senses, in a certain wonderful and inexplicable manner exist without a subject matter. And we may indeed see all the acci-

dents of bread and wine, which, however, inhere in no substance, but exist by themselves; since the substance of bread and wine is so changed into the very body of the Lord, that the substance of bread and wine altogether ceases to exist.

Than the words used by the Lord Jesus in establishing this Sacrament none could be more perspicuous and clear; as the nature of the act manifestly called for a manner of speech unmistakable beyond all peradventure. For when He said, "This is My body, this is My blood," there is no one who, provided he be of sound mind, can be ignorant of what we are to understand, especially since He speaks of His human nature, which the Catholic faith allows no one to doubt truly was in Christ; there is no room left to doubt about the truth of the body and blood of Christ, when, by the declaration of the Lord Himself and our faith, His "flesh is truly our food."

The true body and blood of the Lord in the Eucharist are declared by the Apostle. For after he recorded the bread and wine consecrated by the Lord, and the sacred mysteries administered to His Apostles, he adds: "But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and let him drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." For if, as heretics say, nothing else in the Sacrament were to be venerated except the memory and sign of the passion of Christ: what need was there of words so weighty to exhort the faithful, that they should prove themselves? For by that weighty word, of judgment,

the Apostle declared that some nefarious wickedness is committed by him who, unworthily taking the body of the Lord, which lies hidden in the Eucharist, does not distinguish it from other kinds of foods. Which also before in the same Epistle the Apostle more fully exclaimed in these words: "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communication of the blood of Christ? and the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" Which words indeed demonstrate the true substance of the body and blood of Christ our Lord. There can be nothing doubtful or uncertain in these passages, particularly since the most holy authority of the Church of God has thus interpreted them.

The belief of the Church in this Real Presence of Christ in this Sacrament, has ever been unmistakable and unshaken. This is shown by the perspicuous words and unanimous consent of the Fathers, which our limits do not allow us to quote, and which may be seen in any treatise on the subject. It is also shown by the prompt and undeviating and vigorous manner in which the Church and faithful have ever treated heretics who dared to broach any teaching contrary thereto; notably in the case of Berengarius, who, in the eleventh century, was the first to attempt to disturb the universally received belief of the universal Church throughout the world from time immemorial. It is further declared by the unerring voice of the Church in Council assembled, particularly by those of Lateran, Florence, and Trent. The consciousness of the faithful, in the passive infallibility which

they enjoy in consequence of the promise of Christ that the gates of hell should never prevail against them, has ever manifested the truth of this heavenly and most consolatory belief.

Nor can it be imagined that Christ, the Redeemer of men and the Founder of this Divine Mystery, could ever allow His Church to fall into error on so vital a matter—an error, too, which would have been induced by His own words.

Nor could power be wanting to Him to effect this all-marvellous work, since He is the Creator of, and possesses supreme power over, all things; which serves to answer all possible or imaginary difficulties and objections.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

EVIL THOUGHTS.

“And they all began together to make excuse.”
St. Luke xiv; 18.

THERE was need of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments to unfold the full meaning of the Sixth and Seventh. For although by a kind of light of nature it is understood, that the desire of possessing another's wife is forbidden, since adultery itself is forbidden (as if it were licit to desire, it would be right also to possess): yet, many of the Jews, blinded by sin, could not be induced to believe that these desires were forbidden by God; nay, even when this law of God was published and known, many who professed themselves interpreters of the law were involved in the same error. This we may observe from that discourse of our Lord in St. Matthew: “Ye have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you that he who looketh upon a woman to lust after her, committeth adultery in his heart.” These two commandments were further necessary, because some things are distinctly and explicitly forbidden, which by the Sixth and Seventh were not prohibited in express terms. For example: the Seventh Commandment forbids, lest anyone unjustly covets or

tries to take what belongs to another ; but this forbids to covet in any manner, even though by right and law that can be obtained, from whose getting injury redounds to our neighbor.

When God by the former commandments had fortified, as it were, with safeguards, that no one should wrong us or ours, he wished by this super-added precept principally to provide that we should not injure ourselves by our appetites ; which would easily happen, if we could freely and fully covet and desire all things. The stings of desires, by which we are wont to be incited to all things hurtful, by force of this law in a manner dulled, press us the less ; and we have therefore the longer space of time, freed from that annoying importunity of our cupidities, for performing those duties of piety and religion which, many and supreme, we owe to God Himself. By this law, therefore, we are taught not only to restrain our desires, but also to know the immense love of God toward us.

This law, moreover, teaches us that the law of God is of such a nature as to require to be observed, not only by the outward performance of duties, but also by the inward sense and inmost sentiments of the soul. Human laws are satisfied with outward fulfillment : Divine laws, since God beholds the soul, require pure and sincere chastity and integrity of the soul itself. The Divine law is therefore a kind of mirror, in which we behold the vices of our nature. Wherefore, the Apostle said : " I had not known concupiscence, if the Law had not said, Thou shalt not covet." For since concupiscence, that is, the fuel of sin, which had its origin from

sin, ever clings fast in us, from this we recognize that we are born in sin; wherefore suppliants do we fly to Him, Who alone can efface the stains of sin.

Let no one perchance think that the concupiscence which is without sin is in any manner a vice; as for the spirit to lust against the flesh, or to seek the justifications of God at all times—that which David vehemently sought. Wherefore, we must know that concupiscence is a certain commotion and impulse of the soul, impelled by which, men desire the delightful things which they have not. And even as the other motions of our soul are not always evil, so this force of concupiscence is not always to be accounted vicious. For neither is it therefore evil, if we desire food or drink; or, when we are cold, if to be warm; or, on the contrary, when we are hot, if we desire to be cold. And indeed this right power of concupiscence was implanted in us by nature, God Himself being the Author; but, by the sin of our first parents, it came to pass that it, overpassing the bounds of nature, was depraved to such a degree that it often incited to lust for those things which are hostile to the spirit and reason.

Furthermore, if regulated, and kept within limits, this power often also affords no ordinary advantages; in the first place, it makes us pray to God with assiduous prayer, and as suppliants beg from Him those things which we mostly wish; for prayer is the interpreter of our desires. Because, if this lawful power of concupiscence were wanting, there would not be so many prayers in the Church of God. Besides, it renders the gifts of God more dear to

us; for, the more vehement the desire of anything with which we are inflamed, the dearer and more delightful will that thing be when we have gotten it. And then the delight itself, which we receive from the desired object, makes us give thanks to God with greater piety. If, accordingly, it is lawful at any time to covet, we must needs acknowledge that not every power or kind of concupiscence is forbidden.

By this commandment, therefore, it is not the force itself of concupiscence which may be used for good, or evil, that is utterly forbidden; but it is the indulgence of corrupt desire, which is called the concupiscence of the flesh and the fuel or incentive of sin; and, if it has the assent of the mind joined with it, is always to be reckoned with vices. Only, therefore, that lust or concupiscence is prohibited which the Apostle calls the concupiscence of the flesh; namely, those motions of concupiscence that go beyond the dictate of reason, and are not confined within the limits prescribed by God.

This concupiscence is condemned, either because it desires evils, as adulteries, drunkennesses, murders and other such nefarious crimes, of which the Apostle says, "Let us not be lusting after evil things, even as they lusted"; or because, although the things by their nature are not bad, there is outward cause wherefore it is wrong to desire them; in which kind are those things which God or His Church forbids us to possess. For it is not lawful to us even to desire that which it is altogether wrong to possess. Such desires when consented to are wicked and to be numbered among the worst of

sins. For then does sin in its nature exist, when, after the impulse of evil desires, the mind is delighted with wicked things, and to these either assents, or does not resist them; as St. James, when he shows the beginning and progress of sin, teaches in these words: "Everyone is tempted, being drawn away and enticed by his own concupiscence; then concupiscence, when it hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, begets death."

All that we have said on this subject of evil desires is not to be confined to any one species of unlawful objects: it is to be extended absolutely and universally to every thing that is wrong in itself, or wrong because it is forbidden. But the frequency of the vice and the proneness of the heart to impurity in its various forms will induce most of you to believe that it is to the latter we have particularly referred. Nor are we reluctant to be so understood. Wherefore we say that it is a grievous sin to covet another's wife or husband, and this whether the desire be that of adultery, or of marriage with another's wife or husband. And this holds true even when either party is divorced: for before God death alone constitutes the divorce which allows the one or other to marry again. Nor is it lawful to covet in marriage those already pledged to others: this would be to violate the most sacred contract of plighted faith which can exist between man and woman. All thoughts or desires, or occasions that create them, harbored wantonly, or harbored wilfully even without pleasure, of impurity in its various kinds and manifold forms and

unmentionable details, are chiefest among the sins of concupiscence, forbidden by the Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." All these it is the paramount duty of everyone to shun under the pain of grievous sin.

"Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey the lusts thereof." For if we resist our lusts, the power of sin falls: if we yield to them, we expel God from His kingdom, and put sin in His place. All these evil desires, the fruit of concupiscence, should we with the greatest anxiety shun: for from concupiscence, as from a kind of fountain, all sins flow, as St. James teaches. Also St. John says: "All that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE HONOR AND INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS.

"I say to you, that even so there will be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-nine just men who need not penance."
St. Luke xv; 7.

THESE words indicate the common and mutual good will and spirit of co-operation which exists between the faithful of Christ on earth and in heaven. The active and sympathetic interest with which the angels of God, and the elect, already secure of their salvation, regard the children of God yet in this world is vividly portrayed in these words twice repeated in St. Luke.

In the face of these words, it is obvious that we should invoke their aid, and reciprocate their interest in us by our honor and veneration. It were useless and worse to perplex ourselves as some do, asking how the saints and angels hear us, when we have before us not only these words but those also of Christ: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of My Father Who is in heaven." The angels must be capable of knowing our wants, since "they are sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation."

The Church has always prescribed not only the veneration and invocation of angels, and blessed

souls who enjoy the glory of heaven, but has decreed honor to the bodies and ashes of the saints. Nothing is more plainly just, or in greater harmony with our natural feelings and the spontaneous dictates of common sense.

It were silly to imagine this teaching of the Church to be in conflict with the supreme duty of worship and love of the Creator as proclaimed in the First Commandment. For who can conceive that, when a king forbids a rival or declares it an affront to his majesty for anyone to usurp the rank of, or suffer himself to be honored as king, it is his will that honor be denied his subordinates and magistrates? For no one need be told that the Church does not give these heavenly beings the worship which is rendered alone to God. Our honor of them is warranted by the example of the Saints of the Old Law.

Nor can it be said that the Angels have refused this veneration. For, if we read that they declined human worship, it was when men in their infatuation or ignorance would have rendered to them the worship which was due to God only. We read the same of the Apostles whom men, seeing the miracles which they wrought, would adore as God: but were reminded by them that they "were but men of like passions with themselves."

The Divine Spirit Who teaches us to give worship and glory to God alone, commands us to honor parents and elders. Besides, kings were adored, that is, were lowly revered, by holy men who worshipped one God only, as we learn from Holy Scripture.

If the kings of the earth are to be honored because appointed to rule men and administer justice, with how much greater honor should we reverence the angels because of their incomparably more excellent nature and dignity, and whom God has been pleased to make His ministers for the government of His Church, and whom He has often employed in the affairs of men, and in the maintenance and order of the physical world; who also watch over us, guarding us from the greatest perils to soul and body, they remaining invisible all the while. Consider, too, the love they bear us, as their fellow creatures, and redeemed in the blood of the Incarnate Word, Whom they continually behold and Whose glory they never cease to extol. Led by this love, they unceasingly pray for the regions entrusted to them, as Holy Scripture discloses. They offer before the throne of God the prayers and tears and trials of men, for whom they make continual intercession. They guide the steps and fill with holy inspirations the souls of those committed to their custody.

They are to be invoked because they are always in the presence of God, and joyfully undertake the care and advocacy of those who wish to become their clients. Jacob begged and even compelled the Angel with whom he wrestled to bless him; he would not let him go till he had blessed him. Not only of the Angel whom he saw, but of him whom he saw not, did he beg a blessing, when he said: "The Angel who delivered me out of all evil, bless the children."

The honor and invocation of the Saints, who

sleep in the Lord, and reverence for their ashes and relics, far from diminishing the glory of God, does but augment it. For by the example of the Saints we are stimulated to their imitation, and by the assurance of their intercession and that of the angels we are inspired with confidence; diffident of our own efforts, our hopes are renewed, our latent, virtuous inclinations are stirred, our good resolutions strengthened. Nothing so draws or impels us to virtue as virtue's concrete exhibition; nothing raises hope or inspires trust as the consciousness of unfailing and devoted friends. The relics of the saints are continual reminders to us of their lives and virtues: they breathe a sweet influence that never languishes or dies; which is all the more lasting because, like the air we breathe, it is imperceptibly inhaled; the impression is not upon the senses but upon the soul. They are like the portraits of our ancestors hung upon the chambers of our remembrance: at given critical moments they recur to us, and impel to virtue or deter from evil.

The Honor and Invocation of the Saints is decreed by the Councils of the Church, and explained and inculcated by the ancient Fathers, notably by St. Augustine, St. Jerome and St. John Damascene. They also testify, what is very pertinent, that the practice was received from the Apostles, and always held inviolate, and handed down in the Church.

Who can desire a stronger or clearer or more unanswerable argument for honoring and invoking the Saints, than the testimony of the word of God contained in Holy Scripture? Therein their virtues are loftily extolled and commended, and their

praises wonderfully celebrated. Why should we refuse, or rather why should we not render, singular honor to those whom God thus honors and bestows His praises upon and marvellously exalts?

They are to be glorified and supplicated, because they earnestly and without ceasing interest themselves in the salvation of men and beseech from God mercy and pardon for them; nor can it be doubted that in answer to their prayers, and for their sake and merits, God confers upon men countless and precious benefits and graces. As "there is joy among them for every sinner that does penance," they will eagerly increase the joy by augmenting the number: and this they will do by helping men to repentance, beseeching pardon for their sins, and imprecating the grace of God for them.

Nor can it be said that it argues weakness of faith to employ the Saints as intercessors and patrons, or that God needs no interpreter to hear our prayers. Behold the example of the Centurion who, while his faith was such as merited the praise of the Lord, that He had not found such faith in Israel, yet sent the elders of the Jews to our Lord to beg health for his sick servant. "There are many things," says St. Augustine, "which the Lord does not grant, except through a mediator and intercessor." This is illustrated by the plain examples of Abimelech, and Job's friends. Their sins were forgiven but by the prayers of Abraham and Job (St. Luke vii; 3).

Nor can it be said that the intercession of the Saints divides the mediation or diminishes the glory of the one Divine Mediator, Who through His

blood has reconciled us to the Eternal Father, and Who, when He had accomplished our redemption, entered into the holy of holies, where as the Great High Priest He makes perpetual intercession for us. For, otherwise, the Apostle would have never done what was injurious to the Divine Mediator, nor commended himself so earnestly to the prayers and intercession of his living brethren. For as the prayers of the living do not discredit the mediatorship of Christ nor diminish its efficacy, so neither does the intercession of the Saints in Heaven; hence we may no less have recourse to their patronage. Truly the merit and efficacy of the intercession of all the Saints and faithful, living and dead, flows from the one Divine Mediation, consummated and sealed in the blood of the Redeemer: through His Name all prayer is offered; without His Name all prayer is unavailing.

The acceptableness to God of devotion to the Saints and their Invocation is shown by the miracles which during life He by their agency wrought, and after death by the touch of their bodies and relics; and the other favors vouchsafed to men in their name, and by prayers addressed to them. Ecclesiastical history, and the writings of many of the Fathers, notably St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, bear record and testify, not as if they had heard of them, as many others have done; nor as if they had read of them, as a great many judicious men have done; but as of things seen by themselves and accomplished in their presence, to these wonders wrought. Who should not be convinced of the honor due to the Saints, and of the watchful pro-

tection which they observe over us, by the miracles that have been done in their names?—as the blind restored to sight, the lame to soundness, the maimed to wholeness, disease turned to health, the dead brought back to life, devils cast out of those possessed by them, and other prodigies clearly the work of God's right hand. The very touch of their garments, the very shadow of their persons while in this life, drove away disease, and restored soundness to the sick; their ashes, their bones, their relics were attended with the same wonderful efficacy; the dead body which was lowered into Elisha's grave, on touching the prophet's body, was at once restored to life. Thus has been sealed the justice and holiness of the worship of the Saints.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

“When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at the knees of Jesus, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord !”—St. Luke v ; 8.

It is all-necessary, in receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that we receive all the benefits of the Sacrament; not merely the Sacrament but the substance and efficacy and grace of the Sacrament. For it is quite possible that we receive the one without the other; it will all rest upon the disposition with which we approach its reception.

Some receive the Sacrament only. These are they who presume to take the Sacred Mystery into an impure mouth and heart: into a conscience defiled with mortal sin. These, in the language of the Apostle, “eat and drink the body of the Lord unworthily.” And as a consequence “eat and drink damnation to themselves for not discerning the body of Christ.” These of course derive no profit but eternal detriment and ruin from their Communion. Because they who abide not in Christ and Christ in them by grace, as branches in the vine, eat not spiritually His flesh, although visibly they press it with their teeth, according to St. Augustine.

Others receive the Eucharist spiritually. These

are those souls who, kindled by faith which works by charity, eat this Divine food in spirit and desire, although not actually receiving the Sacrament. These doubtless partake of very great benefits, though they receive not all the fruits of the Sacrament. Others, having proved themselves according to the Apostle's mandate, and finding their souls free from mortal sin, and, may be, from venial; or, having cleansed their souls therefrom in the Sacrament of Penance, and having adorned themselves in the wedding garment of grace, and furnished with fervent dispositions of faith, hope and love, approach this Sacrament, receiving therefrom most plentiful fruit unto life everlasting.

The need of special preparation for the reception of the Divine Eucharist is implied in the act of our Lord in washing the Apostles' feet before giving them, for the first time, His body to eat and blood to drink, although at the same time pronouncing them clean, and indicating that there was but one unclean. Moreover, He insisted upon this special preparation when they in their humility would have spared Him this humiliation. By this He would teach us that we should bring to this Sacrament the greatest innocence and purity of soul. If one receive the body of Christ without these due dispositions, he will derive no advantage but entail upon his soul detriment and injury, in a manner proportioned to the rich gifts and fullest endowments of heavenly grace which fill the soul well prepared and well disposed. For, in the one case it is the pledge of a future resurrection and immortal life: in the other it is the threat of eternal death and condemna-

tion. The most wholesome foods that profit us when reasonably and seasonably used, become the most noxious and destructive when received out of season or in a body ill prepared to assimilate it. Disease and death may ensue from that which in itself is the source of health and life.

Hence this Divine food, capable of ensuring immortal life to the worthy recipient, brings eternal death to the unworthy. "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "let a man prove himself; and so eat of this bread and drink of this wine. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the body of Christ."

The first step in preparation for Holy Communion is to discern or discriminate the body of Christ from ordinary bread. Neglect to do this, according to the Apostle, renders the culprit guilty of the body and blood of Christ. For it were the rankest sacrilege to confound this bread from heaven and food of angels, vouchsafed to men for spiritual nourishment of their souls, with the bread of earth meant to support our bodies in their toils and waste. This we do, when in true faith and without any manner of doubt we believe that the true body and blood of the Lord is present according to His own words: This is My body and this is My blood; the body and blood of Him Whom the angels adore in heaven, Whose glory and power fills the universe and all things. However, the greatness and truth of this Mystery is to be adored in faith rather than searched into with prying and idle curiosity, or useless scrutiny, or vain subtlety, or

noisy dispute. He who is a scrutinizer of majesty will be overwhelmed with its glory. Let not men with high-blown conceit rush in where angels fear to gaze. That Word at which heaven and earth tremble with fear and would fade away for reverence, and which has made all things visible and invisible, and sustains them forever, this Word, I say, must be the unshaken foundation and unfailing motive of our faith.

The conscience is to be diligently searched before approaching this Sacrament. We should inquire into our relations with our neighbor, ourselves, and our God. Whether we are at peace with all men, or are alienated from them by hatred; or presume to offer gifts at the altar or become partakers of this Divine Gift of God's charity, while contemning the divine law which should unite all men. For he is not acquitted of his duty to God, who fails in the love he owes his fellow-man, God's image and creature as well as himself. Let him, therefore, scrutinize his conscience whether he loves his neighbor truly and with all his soul; whether he forgives others, and has sought forgiveness from them for the wrongs he may have done them; whether he has made amends for his breaches of charity or justice; and, above all, made restitution of all ill-gotten gains or goods. "If therefore," says Christ, "thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first and be reconciled to thy brother: and then come and offer thy gift" (St. Matt. x; 23-24).

Also, we should search our consciences lest they

be defiled with any mortal sin, and we thus separated from God and in open hostility to Him; or that, sitting down at the marriage feast without the wedding garment of grace, we be cast into exterior darkness, the abode of eternal punishment. That we may not incur the condemnation of St. Paul on the unworthy communicant, we should be able to say with St. Peter: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," and this from the heart, not the lips.

If we have the sad misfortune of being in this wretched state, it will not suffice that we grieve, even with our whole heart and from the loftiest motives, for our sins. For the Council of Trent has decreed that, before approaching this Sacrament, every deadly sin must be confessed in the tribunal of Penance, no matter how contrite the heart or firm the purpose of amendment may be, or seem to be; unless, indeed, it be impossible to find an authorized priest, and the duty of communicating cannot be deferred. Contrition implies the purpose of confession according to the law of Christ, which requires all sins to be subjected to the power which He has lodged in His Church, for their forgiveness. He who is not willing to observe this law betrays the imperfection of his contrition, as he is unwilling to take the necessary means or comply with the condition for its pardon. By the medicine of contrition and the obligation of confession and the power of the keys in the Church, the soul must be purified from sin and restored to spiritual health.

We should also cultivate a realizing sense of our unworthiness and manifold shortcomings to receive this Sacrament. For, if we had the purity of the

angels and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, we were not worthy of this Sacrament. How much less, seeing our past sins, and at best our feeble sorrow, and otherwise imperfect dispositions: our frequent lapses and relapses; our unsteady purposes and little amendment; all which were enough to fill us with heartfelt compunction and make us feel how undeserving we are of this Divine benefit. Nothing but the goodness which prompted its institution could continue to allow us to partake of it, after such sinfulness and ingratitude continually renewed.

At the same time, while we are thus filled with sentiments of the deepest humility, we should be persuaded of our extreme need of this divine support. Without this Sacrament and unsupported by its grace, we should certainly fail in the way of salvation; and, therefore, in spite of our faults and weaknesses and backslidings we must persevere in taking it. For, if so weak and frail and prone to fall even with its support, what would become of us deprived of it? While the sentiment of the Centurion should be always with us, "Lord I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof," yet we should always add with him, "Say but the word and my soul shall be healed"—words so grateful to the ear of Christ that He declared He had not found so great faith as they expressed, no, not in Israel. In their truest sense we should make our own of the words of Peter given in our text, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." For He will not depart from, but rather enter into and take possession of the heart filled

with such humility and spirit of repentance. For, to whom else could we go? He alone has the words of eternal life.

Happy he who, about to receive the body of Christ, can truly say with St. Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Happy he who has preserved his innocence, or who, having by masterful repentance recovered it, has so ordered his manner of life and shunned the occasions of sin, that he has persevered ever since in God's grace, and devoted himself, without relapse or intermission, to His love and service: who can say, Lord, Thou knowest that although I once knew sin and continued to offend Thee, I now, and for these many years, know not sin and have diligently sought the way of Thy commandments, and above all things placed Thy remembrance, and detested iniquity. Such a one will not meet the calamity of him who sits down at the Lord's feast without the wedding garment of innocence, and is cast into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; but, rather, in his humility seeking the lowest place, he will be brought up higher, and thus receive glory from all.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

ON ADULTERY.

“Ye have heard that it was said to those of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”—St. Matt. v; 27-28.

THE Sixth Commandment forbids all kinds of impurity, whether of thought or act. The words of the text plainly state that even a look accompanied with lustful desire is forbidden. Nor is it necessary to define the many ways in which this sin of impurity may be committed. In doing this we might do the evil which it is our utmost desire to avoid: instead of quenching we might kindle or extend fuel to the embers of lust, which lie smouldering in many hearts. Would that our duty allowed us to follow the Apostle's monition, who would have fornication not so much as mentioned among Christians. Yet the prudence of the Apostle is not to deter the priest of the Gospel, any more than it did the Apostle himself, from denouncing this rank and horrid vice.

This precept not only forbids adultery and every kind of impurity, but it also commands us to cultivate chastity of soul and body.

Holy Scripture is replete with warnings against lust in its various kinds. In Genesis there is the judgment of Judah against his daughter-in-law. There is the admirable law of Moses in Deuteronomy that there should be no whore of the daughters of Israel. There is, besides, the exhortation of like kind of Tobias to his son: "Take heed to keep thyself from all fornication." And Ecclesiasticus likewise: "Be ashamed of a look at a whorish woman." In the Gospel Christ our Lord says, that out of the heart proceed adulteries and fornications, which defile a man." The Apostle Paul detests this vice often, and with many and the severest words: "This is," he says, "the will of God, your sanctification, that you keep yourselves from fornication"; and "Flee fornication"; and "Associate not with fornicators." "Fornication," he says, "and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be even named among you"; and "Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor those lying with men, shall possess the kingdom of God."

While this commandment forbids every kind of impurity, as I have already remarked, yet adultery is explicitly mentioned because, besides the turpitude which it has in common with other kinds of intemperance, it carries with it as well the sin of injustice not only against our neighbor, but also against civil society. That is also certain, that he who does not restrain himself from the gratification of other lusts, easily falls into the incontinence of adultery. Wherefore, by this prohibition of adultery, we readily understand that every sort of uncleanness

and immodesty by which the body is polluted is forbidden, even every inward lust of the mind. And this the force of the law itself shows, which it is evident is spiritual, and because Christ our Lord taught, in words already quoted, that he that looks at a woman with evil mind, sins in his heart.

With all zeal should people cherish modesty and continence, and "cleanse themselves from every uncleanness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting sanctification in the fear of God." Although the virtue of chastity shines forth more in the sort of people who holily and religiously cultivate that most beautiful and plainly divine profession of virginity, yet it belongs also to those who lead a celibate's life; or, joined in marriage, preserve themselves pure and intact from forbidden lust.

A right understanding of the turpitude and destructiveness of the crime will contribute much to its restraint and conquest; and by this knowledge its detestation will become the easier. It must be a destructive crime, since on account of it, men are driven and thrust out of the kingdom of God; which is the worst and last of all evils. While this calamity is indeed common to all deadly crimes, yet it is peculiar to this that fornicators are said to sin against their own bodies, according to St. Paul thus writing: "Fly fornication; for every sin whatever a man doeth, is without his body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body." The violation of its sanctity inflicts a grievous wrong upon the body. "This," says the Apostle, "this is the will of God, your sanctification; that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of

you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles who know not God." Besides, "Know ye not," asks the Apostle, "that your members are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid; what, know you not, that he who is joined to a harlot, is made one body!" Moreover, a Christian, as the Apostle testifies, is "the temple of the Holy Ghost"; which to violate, what is it but to cast out from it the Holy Ghost?

In the crime of adultery there is grievous injustice. For if, as the Apostle has it, they who are joined in matrimony, the one of them is so subject to the power of the other, that neither has the power and right over his or her body, but are so bound by a certain mutual bond, as it were, of service between themselves, that the husband comply with the will of the wife, and, on the other hand, the wife to the will and disposition of the husband: certainly, if either disjoins his or her body, which belongs to the other, from him or her to whom it belongs, it is a crime most unjust and nefarious.

Adultery brands men with a notable mark of disgrace: if other motives fail, at least this fear of infamy should powerfully incite men to what is just, and with great effect deter them from what is forbidden. For it is thus delivered by Holy Scripture: "He who is an adulterer, because of lack of understanding, will lose his soul: he gathers to himself disgrace and ignominy, and his reproach shall not be wiped out. Besides, the magnitude of this crime can be easily perceived from the severity of its pun-

ishment; for adulterers, according to the law prescribed by the Lord in the Old Testament, were stoned to death. Truly, even for the lust of one man, not only he that committed the crime, but sometimes a whole city, as we read of the Sichimitis, has been destroyed.

Many examples of Divine punishment are given forth in Holy Scriptures which should deter men from nefarious lust. Witness the destruction of Sodom and the rest of the neighboring cities; the punishment of the Israelites who fornicated in the wilderness with the daughters of Moab; and the slaughter of the Benjaminites.

Yet, those who escape death, do not always escape the intolerable pains and excruciating tortures with which the lecherous are often chastised; for, blinded in mind, which is a most grievous punishment, they so become and are so lost, that they make no account of God, nor of reputation, nor of honor, nor of children, in fine, nor of their life; and by this means they become so wicked and profitless, that nothing serious ought to be entrusted to them, and they are fit for almost no discharge of duty. Of this we may seek examples in David and Solomon: the former, after he fell into adultery, became at once the very reverse of himself; from the mildest, he became cruel, so that he offered to death Urias, who had deserved most well of him; the latter, when he had become entirely a prodigal and abandoned himself altogether to the lust of women, so turned himself from the true religion of God that he followed after strange gods. This sin, therefore, as Hoseas says, takes away the heart of man, and often blinds him.

As to the ways, so many, which excite to lust, as idleness, over-drinking, over-feeding, unguarded eyes, over-elegance of dress, obscene or prurient conversation, lascivious songs, indelicate dances, indecent or suggestive pictures, immoral books, especially when wearing a thin disguise of correctness, or of exquisite style, of all these, and of many others, and of the remedies which they imply, and of the many other antidotes for this vice, we must defer what is to be said, as the time fails us.

THE FEAST OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL.

THE CONSERVATION OF THE CHURCH.

“ And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—St. Matt. xvi; 18.

THE Conservation of the Church is a final confirmation of the Divine Mission of Christ. He had preannounced as in our text that He would build His Church on a rock; that the gates of hell would forever assail her, but that they would never prevail against her; that the Holy Ghost would abide with her forever; and that He himself would be with her all days until the consummation of the world.

These words have been more than verified. The assaults against the Church, which have never ceased, were predicted, and the remedy supplied by which they were to be overcome and the Church preserved intact.

While the blood of Christ yet bedewed Calvary, the Jews sought to exterminate the Gospel. They continued the persecution against His Apostles and followers which they had begun against the Lord, ending with His crucifixion. Saul, the zealous partisan of their traditions, and the accomplice of those who had shed the blood of the first martyr, Stephen, was sent to Damascus to apprehend those

believers in Christ who might there be found, and to lead them bound to Jerusalem before the priests to be tried and sentenced and, it may be, to die for their faith. But on the way he was miraculously struck with light from heaven and heard the voice of Jesus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He was converted, and became the teacher of the Gentiles and, in the end, a martyr for Christ. This victory for the Church was the type and first fruits of all her subsequent conquests in the world.

In the first ages Jews and pagans sought to destroy the Church and the Gospel entrusted to her. The flesh, the world, and the devil, assailed by the Gospel, struck back with redoubled blows, and sought to eradicate from the earth what taught, as its first principle, their subjugation. Paganism arose in its fury against what threatened, and, in the result, destroyed its worship and leveled its altars and obliterated its priesthood and diabolical rites. And this warfare for three hundred years continued, until the Roman empire, drunk with the blood of the martyrs and struck with the malediction of heaven, fell; and from its ruins sprang a new and Christian civilization.

Thirty and more of Christ's vicegerents during this long period were empurpled with the blood of martyrdom. Millions were the martyrs who, during this long night of persecution, shed their blood in defense of Christ and His Gospel. Doubtless many fell; but in their fall they confessed that it was their weakness and sin, and not the falsity of their belief that caused their fall. And if from time to time many fell, how many arose again, con-

fessing their perfidy, and persevering in confessing Christ before men? And if sin bewitched and seduced many whom red-handed tyranny could not coerce, they have again broken its bonds, risen from it, and pressed on to the noble standard of Gospel morality. These falls and risings were but the ebb and flow of the battle between power and weakness, between sin and virtue. The Gospel always gained the ultimate triumph.

After these ages she had to breast herself against new and even more dangerous foes. Then appeared false religion attempting to usurp her place, and covering even in the lifetime of its founder a great part of the East; and, in the course of centuries, threatening to deluge all Christian lands, as it had already desolated some of the noblest Sees of the East. A superstition requiring no belief but what the mind instinctively gives in a God, and restraining no passion of the heart, but yielding unrestrained license, humanly speaking, would soon destroy the Gospel with its mysteries inexplicable to human reason and its morality so crucifying to human propensity. Other religions arose and still subsist, which by purloining much of the doctrines and ordinances of the Church, would almost deceive men to believe that they were the original Revelation made by Christ, so perfect was the counterfeit.

Then arose the spirit of heresy. The human mind had chafed under its submission to authority, and would fain substitute its intelligence: instead of obedience it would have investigation; instead of an infallible decision it would have its frail judgment. Reason thus abandoned its proper place as

the taught and would become the teacher. Unhesitating submission to God's oracle on earth was too much for the pride and self-sufficiency of the human heart. Human reason brought to bear upon Revelation would reject what displeased it, would embrace what suited it: this irrepressible tendency necessarily leads to heresy and scepticism. Nothing short of an unerring authority can hold reason to its duty and preserve Revelation from sceptical criticism and consequent rejection.

Times almost past counting has the spirit of schism sought to rend in twain the seamless robe of Christ. Often has she been apparently almost overcome by the ingratitude and insubordination of her own children. How often have the bonds which held the faithful together and in union with their pastors been broken and dissolved, and fearful havoc blighted the Church. How often have heresiarchs arisen and, in imitation of the fallen angel, drew after them a great part of the Church.

Heresy and schism, supported by the power of kings and princes, have sought by all human means to destroy the Church and her inherent rights. Money, arms, alliances of every kind have been employed to bring her into subjection and contempt. Science has ransacked the bowels of the earth to find evidence which might damage her claim to divinity. Satire and scorn has contributed its potent aid to bring into contempt the Christian name. Pagan and infidel philosophy has levelled its poisoned darts against her, all human resources and gifts have been invoked to destroy Christ and His Gospel.

Barbarism in Goths, Huns, and other uncivilized peoples assailed the Church. She withstood the impact of their invasion: enlightened them and Christianized them, imparted to them religion and redemption, and converted these savage populations into humble and docile children. During the wars which desolated Europe, consequent on these eruptions and the fall of the Roman empire, she, the depository of Divine Revelation, preserved it in all its integrity and purity. She was the ark bearing over the waters whatever was valuable in the old civilization together with the Gospel.

Her whole history has been one long conflict with the world, which she was sent to teach and save. She has ever sought to raise mankind to the standard of the Gospel, to impart to all the light and blessings of religion. In doing this she has been the potent power in preserving civilization. Sufferings and persecutions and triumphs and glory have alternated and been mixed in her marvellous career.

In the perpetual conflict of which her history is but the record, all human advantages were arrayed on the side of the world: government, political influence, inexhaustible wealth, human passion, human glory—all that makes up life, and which most men live for and frequently die for. While the Church was destitute of all this, or, rather, had all this against her. Human pride and power used all this to destroy her. She had to meet and withstand the machinations of the evil one working through human agents, through all the ages. Yet, she sustained no injury that was not eventually repaired, and became the fruitful soil and potent cause

of greater growth and augmented splendor. In her greatest desolation she walked secure, gathering in new harvests of souls. As she progressed with giant strides, she saw her enemies disappear. She carried and still carries the banner of victory to remote generations. She regains in one age what she lost in the preceding. Continually renewed in life and vigor, she flourishes and gains new triumphs, widens her tabernacles and stretches herself beyond all former limits and times. Her worship, full of majesty, unfolds in every clime. Tranquil in her conscious strength and undisturbed by the turmoil of the world and the mad passions of men, she beholds the abortive efforts of the impious for her destruction. At her bidding new saints, glowing in heroic virtue, and doctors, crowned with supremest wisdom and learning, arise for her defense. Gifts of the Holy Spirit and miracles in grace and nature, affording unerring proof of His abiding presence, and of her unfailing holiness, are everywhere and always to be seen in countless multitudes of the children of her bosom, and, luminously, in the recorded acts and lives of those she canonizes.

All the other governments and institutions of men have failed or run their course, and many of them are forgotten. She alone has survived all worldly vicissitudes, and shown herself invulnerable to the disasters incident to human fortune and inseparable from our human condition. Time that has destroyed all other things seems but to have struck her roots deeper and deeper in the earth, to manifest her essential indestructibility, her Divine origin and

mission. The pride of men may mock her, their wisdom may account her claim folly, their power may assail her. But, she stands defiant and confident in her teeming strength to maintain herself and to overcome all opposition; and relying on the assured and assuring promises of Him who has declared her eternal and unfailing, she does her work and leaves the issue with God, knowing that "He will give the increase."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

GOD'S CARE OF MEN.

"I have compassion on the crowd, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat."—St. Mark viii; 2.

THE first word of that prayer which Jesus Himself has taught us proclaims unmistakably the fatherly care which God bestows upon the children of men, who are at the same time His children. That word Father is indeed pregnant with consolatory meaning and replete with mystery to be pondered. Although our Saviour could have begun this divine prayer with any word more expressive of majesty and power, such as Creator or Lord, yet those which could strike us with fear He omitted; and He employed that which could inspire love and confidence in those praying and begging anything from God. For what is sweeter than the name of Father? which sounds indulgence and love.

That God is truly the Father of all men, faithful and infidel, is seen in the singular endowment which He has bestowed upon them: for He has made them in His own image and likeness, a dignity which He has conferred on no other creature. By this He clearly indicated the eternal and God-like destiny which awaits them; conditioned, however, as their

free will indicates, upon their fidelity or infidelity to the Divine law written in their heart. Nor is it necessary to dwell upon the transcendent benefit of creation, of being drawn out of nothing, and that, too, in preference to all the possible beings present to Divine omniscience, and who would have proved themselves more worthy of existence, and corresponded more fully with the design of the Creator in bringing them into being.

This same Fatherly love shines forth in God's providing and consulting for men's interests by particular dispensations of His care and providence. Not only by the general laws of creation, and conservation, which is a continued creation, does the Creator evince His unceasing and unwavering care of His human children, in common with all His creatures, but by gracious economies does He manifest to them His predilection.

Among these the tenderest love for men, and solicitude for their welfare, is exhibited in placing the human race in custody of the angels, and in assigning to every man a heavenly guardian ever at hand to guard him against evil. As parents employ protectors for their children pursuing dangerous journeys through places infested with malefactors, so our heavenly Father places His angels over us in our journey through the dangers of this life to our eternal home, by whose aid and vigilance protected, we may escape the snares of our enemies, repel their fierce and unceasing assaults, hold straight on our course, unseduced by the temptations on every side, and, uninveigled by snares or unblinded by error or unenslaved by sin, we may not

be led astray from the secure path that leads to heaven.

The great advantage of God's care for men, and His singular providence whose dispensation is entrusted to the angels, whose nature is intermediate between God and man, appears from the abundant instances recorded in Holy Scripture, which testify that oftentimes by the goodness of God, it has happened that in the very sight of men, angels wrought wonderful things; by which we should be advised that innumerable marvels of this kind, which do not fall under our eyes, are advantageously and wholesomely accomplished by the angels, the custodians of our salvation. Nor is it only at certain junctures or on special errands that they are sent: but from our very birth they are charged with our care, and placed as a defense for the salvation of every man. Assuredly, in view of all this, our minds and souls should recognize and venerate the paternal care and providence of God over us; to this, at all times and under the most trying circumstances, and even when it involves the most grievous sacrifices, we should heartily and unflinchingly submit ourselves.

Nor have the crimes and wickednesses innumerable since the first parent of our race and our own sins up to this hour, by which we have offended the majesty of God, overcome His goodness or exhausted His patience in our regard; He continues His charity toward us, nor has He laid aside that special care over us, which is truly but a continuation of the goodness which led Him to bring us into existence. Whom if anyone thinks to be un-

mindful of men, he is mad, and hurls upon God the most unworthy insult. God is angry with Israel because of the blasphemy of this people, which thought itself stripped of Divine aid. "They tempted the Lord, saying: Is the Lord among us, or not" (Exodus xvii; 7). Ezechiel records that the Lord was incensed because the same people had said: "The Lord does not see us; the Lord has abandoned the earth" (viii; 12). And in Isaiah we read: "Sion hath said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord is unmindful of me." To whom the Lord made answer: "Can the mother forget her infant, that she has not pity on the son of her womb? and if she should be unmindful, yet I will not forget thee; behold, in my hands I have carried thee" (xlix; 14-16).

God's treatment of our first parents after their sin evinces that at no time can He lay aside His remembrance of men or withdraw from them the offices of Fatherly love. Who would not think that when, after the neglect and violation of God's command, and you hear them sharply accused, and condemned in that dreadful sentence: "Cursed is the earth in thy work; in labor shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth"; when you see them driven out of paradise and, that every hope of return should be taken away, at the entrance is placed a cherubim holding a flaming and revolving sword; when you know that they were afflicted by God avenging their wrong with inward and outward afflictions: would you not, I ask, think that it was finished with man? and would

you not believe not only that they were stripped of all Divine help, but also given over to every sort of injury? Nevertheless, amidst so great evidence of God's wrath and vengeance, there arose a certain gleam of His charity towards them: "For," says the Scripture, "the Lord God made for Adam and his wife coats of skins, and clothed them," which was a supreme proof that at no time would God ever be wanting to men.

That the love of God is not to be exhausted by any wickedness or injuries of men, David declared in these words: "Will the Lord in His anger shut up His tender mercies?" And this Habacue, addressing God, unfolds when he says: "When Thou art angry, Thou rememberest mercy."

Thus it is, that when we think ourselves utterly lost, and stripped of God's protection, then, especially for His immense goodness, does God seek and care for us; for He stays in His anger the sword of His justice, nor does He cease to pour forth the exhaustless treasures of His mercy. All this proclaims beyond peradventure the loving care of God for men.

However, it is in man's Redemption that the Divine goodness and inexhaustible paternal love shines forth in a manner beyond all comprehension; by which most excellent and marvellous Redemption we become after the most admirable manner the very sons of God. For, says St. John, "He has given them power to become the sons of God," and "They are born of God." Therefore it is that Baptism, which is the first pledge and memorial of Redemption, is called the Sacrament of regeneration:

for by it we are born sons of God. The other Sacraments also convey to our souls the merits of Christ's Redeeming blood. By virtue of this Redemption we have received the Holy Spirit, and have been dignified with the grace of God. By which gift we are adopted the sons of God: "Ye have not received the spirit of servitude again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption of sons, in whom we cry, Abba, Father." "See ye, what charity the Father has given us, that we may be called and be the sons of God."

What must be the indefeasible and never to be fully satisfied claims of gratitude which we inevitably owe to God for His Fatherly care over us, as our Creator, Provider, and Redeemer—claims which eternity itself can never repay; and what should not be our unfailing trust in Him, always and under every trial?

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUN- TIDE.

ON HELL.

“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.”—St. Matt. vii; 19.

HELL is that most loathsome and dismal and dark place where the souls of the damned, together with the unclean spirits, are tortured with everlasting and unquenchable fire; it is also called gehenna, an abyss or bottomless pit, and in its literal signification, hell.

If there is anything laid down clearly and unmistakably in the New Testament it is the Existence and Eternity of Hell; and that, too, in the very words of Christ Himself. To the Apostles He left it to announce other and more consoling truths; never once, for instance, does He declare that Heaven is everlasting. But He reserved to Himself, as if He foresaw the opposition which men would make to it, the tremendous truth that Hell is everlasting. Three times over within the compass of three verses in St. Mark, ch. ix, does He declare that in Hell “The worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.”

Hell was created to vindicate the justice of God. Into it the souls of the damned enter when they leave their bodies at death. This doom is reasserted on the day when Christ will come to judge the world. Then will He pour forth His justice on the wicked in these words: “Depart from Me, ye cursed into

everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."

The words, "depart from Me," express the supreme and greatest punishment with which the wicked shall be afflicted. For they shall be cast out the greatest possible distance from the sight of God; nor can they ever be consoled with any hope that it can ever come to pass that they may enjoy so great a good. This is called the pain of loss; and loss it truly is that no mind of mortal can ever in this world comprehend, that the wicked in hell shall ever want the light of the sight of God.

This will constitute an agony of soul of which we can have no conception, or, at most, a very feeble one, while in this world. For the soul is made for God and tends to God by every energy of its nature. But this supreme inclination of its being is arrested and held in suspense by the veils of sense and the domination that sense holds over it. Remove these, and nothing can restrain or check the flight of the soul to God. When the soul leaves the body it is freed from these trammels which in life hold it in bondage, and at once unimprisoned, in the freedom and force of its heaven-destined essence, it turns to God and rushes to His eternal embrace. To attain this is its eternal bliss: to lose this is its eternal misery. To be drawn to this, throughout the never-ending days of eternity, and to be eternally repelled and shut out from this, is the unutterable agony and supremest and most essential pain of the damned. This deprivation of the presence of God, even for a time, would be an affliction and torture the greatest the human soul could otherwise possibly endure: but

when we conceive it as everlasting, or existing throughout "ages of hopeless end," it would seem beyond the possibility of endurance; the mind staggers under the thought, and would fain seek relief in unbelief, were it not for the authority of Him, Whose "word, the same yesterday, to-day and forever," is pledged for its truth.

"Ye cursed"; a word which in a marvellous degree augments the wretchedness and calamity of the damned. For if, when they are to be cast out from the Divine Presence, they were held worthy of at least some word of blessing, this assuredly could be to them a great solace; but as nothing of this kind is to be expected by them, which may render their calamity lighter: by the best right, when they are driven out, Divine justice will pursue them with malediction. During life, with every opportunity and incentive to love their God, they insulted Him; in spite of His warning to shun sin, and an affluence of grace to practice virtue and seek eternal happiness, they made themselves slaves of sin and Satan, and recklessly sacrificed salvation for gratifications long since passed, and only present in their results—woeful and never to end. In eternity it is only just retribution that God should condemn them and allow eternal justice to assert itself. They who make a mockery of the Incarnate word, and by their manner of life "put Him before men to an open shame," and while here condemn mercy, have no right to complain when Divine justice, sure and fearful, inflicts condign punishment upon them, prepared for the devil and his angels, whose successors they truly are.

“Into everlasting fire,” continues the final sentence. This other kind of punishment theologians call the pain of sense: because it is felt by bodily sense, like stripes and flagellations, or any graver sort of punishments, among which it cannot be doubted that the tortures of fire produce the intensest feeling of pain. Nor is it to be wondered at, that, in addition to the pain of loss already mentioned, there is also in store for the wicked this physical or bodily torture. For the body is the occasion and cause of sin: while it is the soul that formally sins and is responsible for sin, because it is in the power of soul to give or withhold the consent which essentially constitutes the malignity of sin, yet it is the body and its propensities that allure and stimulate to sin. The flesh rebels against the law of mind. We “see the better things and approve them: we follow the worse.” Out of this incessant struggle of the spirit and the flesh comes the saint as the victor, or comes the sinner as the captive.

The body is, likewise, the instrument of sin. For it is to its appetites that sin brings food, to its burnings that it brings fuel. By its faculties the acts of sin are perpetrated; in its sensibilities the forbidden pleasures of sin are perceived and felt; its rapacious passions blind the mind, and enervate the will, and enslave the soul to yield to its impulses rather than obey the law of the Creator. Therefore, the sinful body, no less than the sinful soul, should suffer just punishment. As the body is rewarded for its obedience to the soul by sharing its eternal felicity, so, also, should it be punished for its disobedience by sharing the soul’s eternal misery.

The punishment which is due the body should be suitable to its nature: as the immaterial soul is tortured with agony because of its sinful consents, so the material body should be tortured with physical pains because it instigated sin, and received in itself the pleasures of sin. While physical torment fearfully affects the soul, mental torment but feebly and, as a punishment no wise sufficiently afflicts the body. The agony of the soul, consequent on its loss of God, is no proportionate punishment to the body. Physical punishment for a physical agent, spiritual punishment for an immaterial agent, is according to nature and equity: both together are alone just retribution for sin, and the necessary readjustment of the Divine order frustrated. Hence Divine justice condemns the bodies of the damned, no less than their souls, to the flames of hell.

We have already seen that the deprivation which the soul suffers in the loss of God is the supremest anguish which it can endure. And this punishment is because of the soul's part in sinning against its Lord and Creator. Not less adequate and supreme and adapted to its nature should be the punishment of the body. For the body is at once the incentive and cause and instrument of sin, and the recipient of its unhallowed pleasure. Proportionate, therefore, and for its capacity, should be the torture of the material body. Now, fire is the intensest torture of which we can have any conception. Our only hope for victims of fire in this life is that they are suffocated to death long before they are consumed. Whether we regard fire as a positive element, or a negative force by which any object is resolved into

its original elements by a species of motion of inconceivable rapidity which reduces as near to annihilation as anything can reach, it is beyond comparison the keenest, intensest of all the tortures which nature or man can inflict or undergo.

This, then, is the only just punishment for the body—as adequate to the sinful body as the loss of God is to the sinful soul. In a manner, and according to their respective natures of soul and body, one punishment is as great as the other: the loss of God causes, every moment, the most fearful anguish to the soul; and the anguish is as eternal: the pain of fire causes, every moment, the keenest torture to the body; and the torture is eternal. Degree of feeling and length of duration, which constitute pain, enter into both; and make them both, in a sense, infinite.

How effectually should not this alarming prospect deter from sin, and hold men to the pursuit of virtue? The pleasures of sin can never be accounted an equivalent or compensation for the torture of hell-fire. And this neither in the degree nor duration of either: no pleasure as gratifying as fire is painful; no length of pleasure as long as eternity of pain. Clearly, therefore, hell, if realized, is sufficient restraint to keep men from sin.

When to this evil it is added that it shall be forever and forever, it is shown that the punishment of the damned is loaded with all punishments. What shall be their augmented misery in never being allowed to leave the companionship of the most accursed and lost demons—never to approach a companion who can be to him a comfort or a relief?

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

ALMSGIVING.

“ And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when ye shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting mansions.”
St. Luke xvi; 9.

RICHES, like all things else, have been given to men as means for their salvation. Whence they are to be used for this purpose: in so far as they hinder this end they are to be cast aside.

The rich will find that the chief, if not the only, way by which their goods may lead to their salvation is by sharing them with the poor and needy; for no other purpose has God given them; for this He has made the rich the dispensers of His Fatherly bounty to the destitute. “ Charge the rich of the world not to be high minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God (Who giveth us all things abundantly to enjoy) to do good, to become rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate, to lay up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life ” (St. Paul to Timothy, I. vi; 17-19).

Our Lord makes this duty to the poor the main issue upon which our destiny at the last day will depend. “ Then will the King say to those on His

right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat: I was thirsting, and ye gave Me to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye covered Me; sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came to Me. . . . Truly, I say to you, as long as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it to Me. Then will He say to those also on His left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and ye gave me nothing to eat: I was thirsting, and ye gave Me not to drink. I was a stranger, and ye did not take Me in: naked, and ye did not cover Me: sick, and in prison, and ye did not visit Me. Truly I say to you, as long as ye did it not to one of the least of these, neither did ye do it to Me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting" (St. Matt. xxv).

How can we claim to love God, and yet not aid the poor? "For he who loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom he doth not see?" asks St. John (I. v; 20). How can we expect our prayers for our own needs to be heard of God, while we are deaf to the cries of the poor to us for help? Insensibility to the poor, and lack of pity for their sufferings, and refusal of prompt and willing relief, closes the mercy of God to us and invokes His anger. "He that stoppeth his ear against the cry of the poor, shall also cry himself, and shall not be heard" (Prov. xxi; 13).

So urgent is this duty that we may at times be

bound even to labor that we may succor the old, the sick, the starving, and those unable to provide for themselves.

If we cannot always give, at least we can lend to our suffering brother, and thus enable him to tide over his actual want. "Lend, hoping for nothing thereby" (Luke xi; 35).

Our reward for this duty well performed will be exceeding great from Him Who will not permit a cup of cold water given in His name to go unrequited. "Give, and it shall be given you: good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom: for with the same measure with which ye measure it shall be measured to you again" (St. Luke vi; 38). "Truly I say to you, there is no man who hath left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, who will not receive a hundred-fold as much now in this time; houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting" (St. Mark x; 29-30).

The duty of almsgiving is not fulfilled by giving an alms a few times and then relegating the needy or the sick one to the Church. This is not the compassion the Samaritan showed, nor does it rise to the standard laid down by Him who declared: "The poor you have always with you;" "Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom." "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay

thee." Besides, the Church has not the resources necessary for such exacting and incessant demands. The offerings for the poor made to the Church would fall lamentably short of the revenue that would be required. As to how far State institutions relieve or reduce the duty of alms-giving, it would be useless to inquire; for they can never efface this God-given duty.

God has provided amply for the needs of the poor in the superfluity of the rich, and by making them the depositaries and dispensers of His bounty. If the poor suffer it is because this law of His providence is neglected or violated by the rich, who will be held to a rigid accountability therefor, or because the poor yield themselves to thriftlessness or dissipation, or, expecting too much from generosity, fail to exert themselves; for he who wants to live ought to be willing to work. The most effectual means at once to relieve the indigent and to check their craven dependence upon others, is to help them to help themselves; lifting them from actual and pressing suffering, and enabling them to earn a livelihood. This is the truest and best Alms-giving.

Moreover, the poor have no right to demand from others more than is implied in that law of Divine providence: "Seek ye, first, the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." For this little more is required than we ask, when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." This is the law propounded alike to rich and poor: neither can claim immunity from it.

It is as applicable to those suffering indigence as to those revelling in luxury.

God undertakes to give what is necessary; He Who made the body will not allow it to starve and perish; but He will not gratify it with luxury, the fruit of sin. This would be a worse destruction than hunger and thirst; this would be to foster sloth and sin, and undo His own work; this would be to contravene and subvert His own command of seeking, first, the kingdom of God and His justice, and making no account of all things else; assuring us that His Divine Providence, which knows our wants, and counts the hairs of our heads, and feeds the birds of the air, will not stop short of His rational creatures, made in His image and likeness. God's care, therefore, extends but to what is necessary, not to those things that are only superfluous: the obligation of the rich to the poor has only the same extent.

Content with this, the poor may cast aside all anxious care and solicitude as to what they shall eat, or drink, or wear. Nor should they, envious of the rich, repine at their lot, in which even greater bliss may be found than in tables groaning with viands and luxuries, or sumptuous furniture, or magnificent dwellings.

The rich, accordingly, should not forget the law of Divine providence, which binds them, and all men, according to their means, to their duty to the poor. Nor should they feel that they need more than the rest of men. It devolves upon them to show the watchfulness and fatherly care of God in providing for the bodily wants of all; a care, how-

ever, always subordinate to the higher one of the eternal salvation of all that seek it. Dreadful the responsibility of those who, hoarding their substance and denying it to the needy, hide God's love for the poor, and cause His providence to be questioned or blasphemed.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE

THE ABUSE OF GRACE.

“For the days will come upon thee, and thine enemies will cast a trench round about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side: and beat thee to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they will not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.”—St. Luke xix; 43-44.

JERUSALEM, in its contempt of God's calls and benefits, and in its subsequent chastisement and reprobation, is the image of the sinner's abuse of grace, and final retribution and condemnation.

Almighty God had bestowed upon the Jews the greatest gifts and blessings for their happiness in this world and in the future. In the words of the prophet Ezekiel, “She was made perfect by the beauty of God, which He had put upon her.” But she refused to employ these Divine benefits for the supernatural end for which they had been mainly given. She abused them to her own ruin. “The commandment that was ordained to life, the same was found unto death to me,” as St. Paul declares (Rom. vii; 10). Jerusalem forgot her God, her benefactor, sank into voluptuousness and sin, and sought material pleasures and even idolatrous wor-

ship and pagan practices. Ezekiel, under the image of an adulterous wife, graphically depicts her ingratitude, disloyalty, and base sinfulness. Christ under the image of a householder sending his servants to receive the fruits of his vineyard; and, finally, his son, saying, They will reverence my son, speaks of the efforts which His heavenly Father had made to collect from the Jews the fruits of virtue and obedience, and in return, their abuse of grace, and final rejection. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest those who are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not. Behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate" (St. Matt. xxiii; 37). He also declared that on his generation should come all the just blood that had been shed upon the earth.

There is no sinner, no matter how countless may be his sins or black their malice, who does not receive grace to be converted, if only he will. Holy Scripture is replete with testimonies showing that not only those already just receive grace to persevere, together with other actual graces, but that the sinner steeped in sin receives grace to rise therefrom, and, as the prodigal, be again embraced by his loving Father. Behold David the adulterer and murderer, made by grace the royal penitent—royal not merely because of his rank, but because of the excellence and nobility of his repentance. Behold Mary Magdalen, the woman taken in adultery; the penitent thief. Those who have been pardoned of their sins, and justified by the grace and gifts of the

Holy Ghost, have nothing to fear. For although besieged with temptation within and without, and "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the princes and the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness, in the high places," grace is given them in abundance to make successful issue with temptation and to keep themselves unscathed from sin; for God is with them; and "He will not allow them to be tempted above their strength."

The grace of God flows into our souls from the boundless ocean of the merits of the Passion and Death of Christ. The instruments by which it is conveyed are the influence and operation of the Holy Ghost in our souls. He enlightens us as to our duties, and our wants; by His warnings, reproaches, and encouragements we are incited to avoid evil, and to practice good. By the Sacraments properly received, as by so many channels, the grace of God is poured in profusion into the soul to supply its manifold needs. By the preaching of the Word, faith and grace find an entrance into the heart. Not by the persuasive words of human speech, but by the showing of the spirit and power does the Divine word tell upon and move the souls of men. By prayer united the sinner, no less than the just, in communion with God the Creator and Redeemer, the soul is made to overflow with grace and light.

Notwithstanding this sufficiency and copiousness of Divine grace for our justification and sanctification and perseverance, notwithstanding this substantial participation of the Holy Ghost for our salvation, we yet remain free under its influence; there

is no constraint put upon our free will; we must co-operate, or we are lost; salvation is not forced upon us. While the Holy Ghost knocks at our hearts, He will not force an entrance: once within, He abides only during our good pleasure. Man's salvation depends upon God; yet man's salvation must in a true sense depend upon himself; the mystery of salvation and the glory of God at once depend upon this freedom of man's will.

In this freedom to use, and this liability to abuse God's grace, rests the risk: the risk, the fatal risk, which the Jews contemned; and, in consequence, were abandoned by Almighty God; their heritage taken away and given to another; Jerusalem overthrown, and the race scattered, and the sign of reprobation placed upon their children forever. Similar reprobation, or rather, worse, is the portion of all who abuse the grace of God; for loss of soul and eternal misery is their lot;—a curse which we should all anxiously deprecate by a faithful use of this greatest of Divine gifts. Let not the fate of the sinner, as read in the fate of Jerusalem, be verified in our own case.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE SINNER NOT WITHOUT GRACE.

“O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”—St. Luke xviii; 13.

THERE is no sin that in this life cannot be forgiven: there is no sinner who in this life cannot repent. Otherwise, free will would be destroyed and the efficacy of grace nullified. Yet the power of grace is such that, free will co-operating, any sinner, even the most blinded and hardened, can be brought to repentance. Even these get grace sufficient to avoid sin, at least, as often as any obligation or precept binding under sin is to be fulfilled; and grace to repent for past sins, which, if not pursuing them every moment, is granted at least according to circumstances, and especially when the necessity of conversion is at hand, as at the hour of death.

Christ willed that all men should be saved; and because of this will He died for all: not less for individuals than for the whole race; not less for the whole race than for individuals: His Atonement, being infinite, its application to the one did not diminish its application to the other. But, if all sinners did not receive grace necessary for salvation, it would not be true that Christ died for all men.

God denies His grace to no one: and the sinner while he lives can with confidence implore and imprecate His aid; for He never abandons him till death seals his doom. His mercy extends over the period of human life; it only ceases when time is no more.

Every soul redeemed by the blood of Christ, that is, every human creature, is bound under God's grievous displeasure to hope in Him for his salvation, and to be converted to Him from sin. But this is absolutely impossible without the sovereign grace of God; unaided human nature cannot accomplish a task supernatural in its character, and, therefore, utterly beyond its inherent strength and limited capacity. Therefore, God's grace must be vouchsafed to the sinner. For God cannot require an end while He refuses the means necessary thereto. Harken to the words of Scripture declaring this truth: "The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine, but for your sake He is slow, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (II Peter iii; 9). "Come to Me, all ye who labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi; 28). How can those thus oppressed and burdened with sin accept this gracious invitation to peace and pardon and conversion of soul without heavenly light and all-sustaining grace? Even the Jews who put Christ and His disciples to death were not abandoned by the Holy Ghost: for if they were, how could St. Stephen rebuke his murderers: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did so do ye" (Acts

vii; 51). If sinners were deprived of the grace necessary to repent for past sin, and avoid future, what meaning could there be in those words of the Apostle: "Or dost thou despise the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long suffering? Dost thou not know, that the benignity of God leadeth to penance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up for thyself wrath on the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works" (Ad Rom. ii; 4-6).

Even in the Old Testament the same truth is proclaimed in the words of Ezechiel: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked man turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: and why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (xxxiii; 11). "But Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and Thou overlookest the sins of men that they may repent. For Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made: for Thou didst not appoint or make anything, hating it" (Wis. xi; 24-25).

The sinner, therefore, even the blinded and obstinate sinner, can never allege the want of grace, to cast aside sin and turn to his God.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

RELIGION IS INTERNAL.

“ And looking up to heaven He groaned, and said to Him: Ephpheta; which is, Be opened.”—St. Mark vii; 34.

IN the Gospel of this Sunday we have abundant warrant for the holy signs and ceremonies with which the Church invests the Sacraments and Divine worship. For we see that our Blessed Lord made use of them in the cure of the man deaf and dumb, upon whom they besought Him to put His hand. “ And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue.” These very ceremonies and words are used in holy Baptism, when the soul, ransomed from the bonds of sin, is made the heir of the Kingdom. Other appropriate ceremonies are employed as well in the other ordinances of religion to signify and express their interior meaning and efficacy. Besides, these external symbols serve to secure respect and reverence for the Sacred rites, and to impress recipients and beholders with the inestimable graces which they bestow, and the need of the due dispositions which their reception calls for. Even that which makes a Sacrament what it is, and which is called

its form, is made up of words, which are but signs or sounds.

Although ceremonies may not be absolutely necessary to the rites which they accompany, they cannot be treated with indifference, but are to be regarded with the greatest veneration, and are not to be departed from except for the most urgent reasons. Yet, if their significance be not understood, much of their utility is lost. As even the gift of tongues is profitless unless the hearer understand; so, in a manner, must be the symbols of the Divine mysteries, unless the things which they image forth and express, be understood.

As it was necessary, in our present state of being, that the mysteries and invisible graces hidden in the Sacraments should be represented and brought home to us by sensible symbols, we have the greatest need that we should not confound the one with the other, or take the sign for the thing signified to the exclusion of the latter. It is the invisible power to which the sign gives expression, that makes it what it is, and gives it soul. In Baptism it is not the water or the words, but the infusion of the Holy Ghost which accompanies these signs, that cleanses the soul. In Penance it is not the confession of sin or the words of pardon, but the communication of the Holy Ghost and His graces, that works justification. In the Holy Eucharist it is not the words—This is My body and this is My blood—but the invisible power of God when these words are spoken, that effects Transubstantiation. In Confirmation it is not the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil, but the power of the Holy Ghost signified by

and accompanying these signs, that imparts to the soul the Holy Spirit and His seven-fold gifts. In Extreme Unction it is not the unction of oil and the prayer of faith, but the grace bestowed upon these symbols, that cleanses the soul from the remains of sin, and restores the sinner, it may be, to health. It is, then, the internal and invisible power of God in the external and visible rite—not the visible and palpable rite itself—that makes the Sacraments what they are: instruments and signs and vehicles of grace. That He might prove to the Jews that He had power on earth to forgive sin—something necessarily invisible—and that the paralytic man had received the benefit of this power, Christ said to him, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.” But it was only when He saw “their faith”—the faith of the man and of those that brought him—that Christ forgave his sins and restored his health.

And this suggests to us the need of due preparation and right dispositions for the fruitful reception of the Sacraments. We are told in another place that “He could not perform any miracles because of their unbelief,” showing thus again that the mysterious working of the Sacraments, interior in its nature, also requires interior preparedness; that mere exterior works will not suffice. The principle of true worship, as declared by Christ, that it must be in spirit and in truth, is the very essence of the dispositions required for the grace of the Sacraments.

While as to their administration the Sacraments produce their effects from the Sacramental act prop-

erly wrought, such is by no means true as to their reception; this requires due disposition on the part of the receiver. Penance, and even Baptism, conferred upon one guilty of actual sin, must find in the soul true sorrow and true purpose of amendment; otherwise, they are sacrilegious, and without fruit in the soul. All the other Sacraments presuppose sanctifying grace, and preparation for the special Sacramental grace which they impart. Without the first, they, too, are sacrilegious; without the second, the recipient forfeits the increase of sanctifying grace and the special Sacramental grace. How necessary, therefore, that we carefully bring due preparedness of soul to these holy fonts of grace, and how sadly we would err if we dared to approach them as mere external rites, through rote or custom or human respect, unmindful of the interior dispositions of soul which they absolutely require, under pain of sin and sacrilege and forfeiture of grace.

II.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHIT- SUNTIDE

MIRACLES.

“ He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.”—St. Mark vii; 31.

“ If I had not done among them works which no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen, and hated both Me and My Father.”—St. John xv; 24.

A MIRACLE is not the result of any agency merely material or natural. Nor can it be the work of any creature, unless it is used by the Creator as His instrument, and then it is as truly His own work as if wrought directly by Himself. The end and purpose of a Miracle requires that it strike the senses, and arouses attention. Hence it must be something sensible, something stupendous, and contrary to the established laws of nature. To arrest attention and to awaken the mind grown used to the wonders around us is the scope of all Miracles. For, otherwise, what greater Miracle could occur, greater or more marvellous, than that which everywhere stares us in the face, but which no longer stirs attention because we have grown familiar with it. It is only saying that a Miracle is a work of God, to say that

it must be supernatural, must be productive of good effects, must conduce to what is virtuous and glorious to God.

The possibility of Miracles cannot be denied without denying the existence of God. He alone who denies creative power can deny the works of this power. For, if a Creator exists, he can exert the power which necessarily must inhere in His nature

The laws of nature do not intrinsically belong to nature; they are conferred upon it by the Omnipotent Creator. Hence the essences of things do not preclude the suspension of these laws by Him Who has ordained them. They have no existence as such either in God or in or outside our minds: they are but the impressions which uniform and uninterrupted action produces in the minds of observers.

God governs not according to some standard or norm to which He must conform; His power is not restricted to the genus and kind or to generalized rules; but He exerts His power on individuals. From this we confound uniform action as applied to individuals with necessary and unyielding law. The uniform, unceasing blows of the smith on the anvil are separate acts, not one; if he ceases, there is no law violated. If he resumes, it is not by virtue of the energy already spent, but a renewed force. If the earth stopped revolving, this stoppage would be as much law as its motion.

Even if these laws were not freely bestowed, and did inhere in essences, God, nevertheless, could pro-
rogate, or suspend, or diminish, or destroy them. Effects can be thus dealt with, while their vital agents remain unchanged. These exceptions to uni-

form and continued action, which we call Miracles, are no more changes than the creation of the world was an innovation on what had been from eternity. And this was no true change; for God intended from everlasting to make the world at a given period.

As it was God alone Who established the physical laws, He alone can derogate with them; as it was He alone Who created all things, it is He alone Who continues them, once created. He alone can suspend these laws, or annihilate His creations. If He decreed either one or the other, it would be as much His eternal providence as if He did not. In this there would be no contradiction or variance. All that He does has been foreseen from eternity, and is all equally His plan and ordering.

As a Miracle can be the work of God only, it is manifest proof of the truth for whose establishment it is wrought: it is the seal of heaven upon him who works them. God can never countenance to or become a voucher for what is untrue or false. A lie cannot wear the livery of Heaven with Heaven's permission or sanction. The teacher who has Miracles to support him and to attest the truths he proclaims, is God's accredited agent, and his teachings are necessarily true. For God could not lead men into invincible error nor disappoint or deceive man in his anxious wish to hear or know something of his Lord and Maker, and of his own origin and destiny. For, deeply imbedded in the human breast and a dictate of its consciousness is the truth that Miracles are the voice and manifestation of the hidden God, the highest testimony to any truth, the

very sign manual of Divinity. And, what is a consequence, that it were sinful and resisting light not to yield an unqualified and unflinching belief in them or the truths which they authenticate.

Of course, there are Miracles, and what are called such and are not. Because there are false miracles does not preclude but rather evinces that there are true Miracles. Counterfeit money is no argument against the genuine coin of the realm; it rather necessitates it; the shadow is no argument against light; it rather implies and accompanies it. We must discriminate in miracles as in other facts; we have intelligence for this purpose. A given natural cause in given natural circumstances will have the same effects. If it does not produce its ordinary effects, but some extraordinary results, and this be accomplished in proof of some truth, we have a Miracle. A man or stick thrown into true fire and remaining uninjured or unimpaired, is indeed a suspension of the laws of nature or a true Miracle.

Angels, good and bad, can by their natural power produce certain effects upon material agents, and by material agents. And these effects wrought by evil spirits may, for the moment, seem to be miraculous. But these cannot be effected to verify error: for there will always be means at hand vouchsafed by God to preserve us from invincible error, by exposing the lying fraud. Demoniactal power and deception must always be subject to Divine power. God's moral attributes cannot allow them to go beyond a certain length. Besides, God cannot allow demoniac deception or false miracles to invalidate or render doubtful the cogency and conclusiveness

of Miracles to establish the truth—the potent instruments by which He has Himself established His revelation.

Such pseudo miracles, or rather, diabolical illusions or wonders, are easily discernible by the marks which always accompany them, and by the absence of those characters that are always written in the true wonders wrought by God, or, with His permission, by His blessed spirits.

The power of God can never support error, or aught against the light of conscience, or of Divine revelation, or any vicious purpose, or end unworthy of God or man. All such would betray the father of lies and deceiver of mankind and “homicide from the beginning.” Truth, conscience, religion, virtue, suffering for justice’s sake, can alone summon and deserve the Divine sanction and seal which Miracles so clearly manifest.

There can be no greater proof of Divine power than that of creating, or of making something out of nothing. Whenever, therefore, there is a work in which this power is seen, that work is truly a Miracle—the work of God’s almightiness. The raising of the dead to life, the instantaneous or sudden curing of the sick and maimed, the descent of the Holy Ghost, the gift of tongues upon the Apostles, the darkening of the sun at the death of Christ, the star that pointed out His birth, the suspension of the motions of the heavenly bodies, Christ feeding thousands with a few loaves, Elias multiplying the flour and oil of the widow of Sarepta, the water issuing from the rock in the desert at the touch of Moses, the manna coming down from

heaven, the sudden formation of physical bodies from inanimate and unformed matter, and many others similar recorded in the Scriptures, new and old, are all manifestations of infinite power; and which no man or angel, good or bad, can of itself perform.

There are Miracles also, which, although not suspensions of the laws of nature, are yet to be accounted true Miracles, because direct interpositions of the Almighty in the natural course of human events and vicissitudes. The circumstances of time when they occur, the purposes for which they serve, the evidence which they afford of Divine pleasure or displeasure, and many other considerations, so conspicuously mark them as the work of God that it would be trifling with reason and abhorrent to human consciousness to account them other than true Miracles. Such are the death, sudden and awful, of Arius; such the rain falling upon the parched Roman legions, at the prayer of the Christian soldiers, known in history as the Thundering Legion. Many other instances of this species of Miracles are supplied in history, sacred and profane.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUN- TIDE.

COMPASSION TO OUR NEIGHBOR.

“Which of these three appeareth to thee to have been a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?”—St. Luke x; 36.

WHEN any member of our body ails, all the rest suffer with it. This is because of the intercommunion that exists between our different parts, and the compactness with which all our members are built into one being. A union just as close, and even closer, although not material but spiritual, incorporates into one all human beings as creatures of a common God, and sharers of a common nature; but, particularly, all Christians as bound together by the great law of Christian love, all redeemed by a common Redeemer and made members of His mystical body. Hence when one suffers all the rest should suffer with, or compassionate him. If we do not feel this mutual sympathy and joint pain, we are not living up to our Christian profession, and vice or indifference has steeled our conscience to obvious duty and our hearts to their best emotions.

The neglect and the practice of this duty of compassion with our fellow man in suffering are strik-

ingly exhibited in the parable of to-day's Gospel. The priest and the levite whose special duty it was to relieve him who had been wounded and maltreated by robbers, and left half dead, passed by, and afforded no relief, and made even no inquiry that might show a sympathetic interest. There are many who seem to think that, if they have duty to the suffering and the sick, it is fully performed by invoking the aid of priest or church, as if they themselves had no personal duty in such cases. It is to be remembered that the law of love and compassion binds all Christians and men: and that this supreme obligation cannot be transferred to either priest or church; it lies upon the conscience of the individual. It would be indeed a sad perversion of the law of Christ if it should be confined to those only whose duty it is to preach it. The Samaritan, the heretic of the period, seeing the man wounded nigh unto death, was moved with compassion: it may have been a religious compassion, or a mere natural emotion. In either case it was praiseworthy, and puts in scandalous contrast the conduct of those who neglect to succor the sick or the suffering or the abandoned.

While the heart should feel for human suffering, the hand and means should extend the necessary relief: mere sympathy can never take the place of active and material aid. Pity unexpressed by act is too cheap a commodity. The Samaritan did not stand aghast at the sight of the naked and bruised and blood-covered and dying man; but "going up to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and set him on his own beast, brought him to

an inn, and took care of him." This was real, active aid, not mere sentiment or pity: this was true and prompt service, personally and with labor rendered, not delegated to another. Many would think that if they had done thus much, nothing more could be expected. Not so the Samaritan; he goes further. "And the next day" (apparently he had waited upon the sick man over night) "he took out two shillings, and gave to the innkeeper, and said: take care of him, and whatever thou shalt lay out over and above, I will repay thee at my return." All this is the active sympathy and fruitful compassion which by the law of Charity, and even of nature, we should render one to another. And Jesus said to him who confessed that the Samaritan who showed mercy to the injured man was his neighbor: "Go, and do thou in like manner."

Many before doing a service to one that needs it will stop to consider what are his claims upon him: is he a relative, or friend, or stranger, or enemy; whether he has ever done them any wrong, or even if there is any prospect of getting recompense. Nothing could be more opposed to the spirit of Charity, and the definition of our neighbor as laid down in the parable which we are considering. If you do not love your enemy, but only your kinsfolk and friends; if because of wrong done you, you refuse to relieve your neighbor; if you do a service only in view of a requital, you are entirely destitute of Christian virtue, and place yourself among those whom Christ condemned because of their sham virtue and hypocrisy. Your neighbor according to Christ is anyone who stands in need of your help,

whether he be friend or foe, relation or stranger, citizen or foreigner, heretic or Catholic, pagan or infidel, Jew or Gentile—anyone who bears the image of God the Creator and has been redeemed by the blood of God the Redeemer. He is your brother and your sister, and your father and your mother, because he represents God to you, and appeals to you in His name and for His sake. He is your neighbor, whom you are bound to relieve.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHIT- SUNTIDE.

THE DUTY OF CONFESSION.

“Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed.”
St. Luke xvii; 14.

IN this command to the lepers to show themselves to the priests, although cured, is clearly taught that all sinners, although already pardoned their sins because of their deep and perfect contrition, are, nevertheless, to submit their sins to the keys of the Church in the Sacrament of Penance. A doctrine taught by the Council of Trent, that no matter how great or perfect the sinner's contrition may be, all and single mortal sins must be confessed in order to fulfil the Divine precept implied in the power bestowed upon the Church in the words addressed to St. Peter: “I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven”; and in the equivalent words to the Apostles: “Whatever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.” In St. John we read that the Lord, breathing on the Apostles, said: “Receive ye the

Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (xx; 23).

This twofold power of forgiving and retaining is obviously a judicial power to be exercised, on the hearing of the case; and this necessarily involves confession or Sacramental self-accusation of all mortal sins, made to obtain pardon by virtue of the keys, or the power of opening and closing bestowed by the Lord upon the Church. When Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, He bade the disciples to loose his bonds: when He restores those dead in sin He uses their ministry also. When He made whole the lepers He commanded them to show themselves to the priests, to submit themselves to their judgment, and to pay the tribute which Moses commanded as a tribute to them.

The priests, dispensers of this Sacrament, could not form an accurate judgment of the dispositions of the penitent, his sorrow, his purpose of amendment: loose him from the occasions and bonds of sin, prescribe proper remedies, cause him to make proper amends or restitution for the wrongs committed, without a full and adequate hearing of the whole case, resting upon an entire confession.

The Jews were scandalized that Christ forgave sin: there are those to-day who pretend to be similarly scandalized. Christ, although God, received power, as man, from His eternal Father to forgive sin. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the paralytic), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house" (Matt. ix; 6). Thus He proved

not only that He, as man, could forgive sin, but that, having become man to forgive sin and save men, He could also confer this power upon priests and bishops in their official character; who were to take His place and carry on in His name the salvation of souls. It is not given for their personal exaltation; nor can it be arbitrarily exercised: only through the Sacraments, duly administered, and received with the right dispositions.

There is no restriction either of sin or sinner or time put upon this power either as to its exercise or reception. No sin, however black or enormous, no sinner, however hardened and depraved, no number of sins however countless, no malice however perverse, no uncounted relapses,—“not only seven times, but even seventy times seven,”—no delay though it were to the last day of life, that cannot be blotted out and the soul made pure as the driven snow, by the grace of this Sacrament. It is all done by the infinite power of God—the same power by which He resuscitated the dead by Himself or His servants, or summoned the world into being. “I am He, who blotteth out your iniquities,” says He through Isaias (xliii; 25). None but the creditor can forgive a debt: none but God, and he whom He has authorized can forgive sin. The despite to Divine mercy which, because of the facility which it affords for pardon, would turn this means of salvation into an instrument of perdition by increased clinging to sin or delayed repentance, cannot fail to render the sinner unworthy of the grace of conversion and to deprive him of the opportunity which he continually contemns.

As without Baptism no one can be cleansed from original, so without this confession, when it is possible, no one can be cleansed from actual mortal sin. Christ meant that all should have recourse to confession as the necessary means of entering heaven. To the Church He has entrusted its gates. No one can enter therein unless through her. The same is true of any gates guarded by a custodian. If entrance could be otherwise secured, in vain would guards be appointed. "Let no man say within himself," remarks St. Augustine, "I repent in secret with God; God, Who has power to pardon me, knows the inmost sentiments of my heart: was there no reason for saying, Whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven, no reason why the keys were given to the Church of God?" The establishment of a given means for the forgiveness of sin excludes all other means for those who can avail of it. He who is dead in sin can be recalled to life of soul by Sacramental Confession, whose administration is the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHIT-SUNTIDE.

OUR ETERNAL SALVATION.

"Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."—St. Matt. vi; 33.

THERE is nothing that God desires so much as our Salvation. For this did He create us; for this did He create all things. He made the world for man; He made man to make him a partaker of His own happiness. He wished to manifest His glory by sharing with His creatures His own bliss and glory.

He has bestowed upon us all the goods of this world as instruments or means to be employed for our Salvation. If we use them for any secondary purpose, it must always be subservient to the great end for which they have been given; to be sought in so far as they will further, to be shunned in so far as they will hinder this end. No riches, no pleasures, no honors are to be sought instead of God, nor as God: if we desire them, it must be in Him and for Him. It is through man's proper use of creatures that they will mainly achieve the end of their being: they are his servants for the promotion of his Salvation. If he use them not for this, he frustrates the design of God. This is a fearful responsibility. It is true that, even if the soul is lost, the glory of God is augmented by the vindication of His justice. But this is in spite of man.

And this never answers the original design of God in the creation of the world. The glory of God is committed to man's hands in his use of the creatures that surround him. Tremble at your accountability. Put yourself at once in harmony with the Divine purpose.

Salvation is the one thing necessary; all things are only necessary or useful in so far as they conduce to it. Salvation accomplished, all is accomplished: Salvation lost, all is lost. No happiness is possible in this life, because none is everlasting. Of what avail are pleasures, riches, honors, glory, that must end shortly, and that may end at any moment? To praise, love, reverence and serve God, and by so doing save the soul, is the highest and only wisdom and the one thing needful, and should be the abiding law of our life.

The remembrance of Salvation should be always before us; no other thought should be uppermost in our minds. "In all things remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." This should be your light and guidance in all undertakings, pursuits, and perplexities. No vicissitudes of life, no disappointments of fortune, no visitations which God's providence permits or sends, can disturb the peace or destroy the security of the soul of him who lives in and is guided by this sovereign and all-sufficient consideration. "Seek ye, first the kingdom of God, and what is necessary thereto, and all things else shall be added." Most men seek all things else, and let the kingdom of God take care of itself.

All our energies should be directed to the attainment of this one thing needful. Men exhaust their

strength and resources in hoarding money, in gratifying passion, in seeking honors—all of which soon pass away, and the time of Salvation is lost. Should we be less solicitous for our eternal happiness than men are for these temporal objects? Truly “the children of this world are wiser for their generation than the children of light.” Why do not the children of light, who are taught by Divine revelation, show as much zeal for God and their souls as worldlings evince for their worldly aims? You cannot do both: you cannot serve God and mammon.

Time is short; we have no certainty of the future. The world will soon cease for us; we know not how soon the grave will close upon us. “This is the acceptable time, this the day of salvation.” Put not off the remembrance of the kingdom of God and His justice from day to day. The years of life for many of you are nearly gone; for the rest of you, they will not be long going. Even youth is no security against death; old age—a continued infirmity—continually invites it. Companions of your youth are gone; companions of your manhood are going daily, hourly; soon it will be your turn. You know not the day or the hour. Be ye ready; “for you know not at what hour the Son of man will come.” But this you may know: it will be when you least expect it. This sudden death is often a visitation of Divine providence. “Because I called and there was none to hear; I stretched out my hands and there were none that regarded; I also will laugh in your destruction. When tribulation and distress shall come upon you, then shall you call upon me, and I shall not hear,” says the Lord.

FOR THE DECOLLATION OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MARTYRDOM.

“ They will cast you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he offereth homage to God.”—St. John xvi; 2.

THE testimony of the Martyrs who suffered and died for their faith in Christ, affords a peculiarly persuasive and convincing argument for the truth of Christianity. Their sufferings in His behalf had been foreseen and proclaimed by Him. “ The servant is not greater than his master. As they have persecuted Me, so likewise shall they persecute you.” “ In the world ye shall have affliction: fear not, little flock, for I have overcome the world ” (St. John).

We shall now see how these predictions were verified. Persecution began in the very beginning. The world showed its opposition to the truth by the slaughter of Christ on the cross. That opposition was continued by the massacre of His apostles. Every one of them died a martyr’s death. And if St. John was spared, it was not that he had not gained the martyr’s crown; for he was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he came forth renewed and reinvigorated.

What is the value of the argument drawn from

the blood of these witnesses for Christ and His Gospel; what is the value of the blood shed by all the early Christian martyrs? A man is not necessarily a martyr because he dies for his opinions. Martyrdom is the bearing witness to the truth. A man's opinions may be false, though he may be intimately persuaded of their truth; if he knows them to be false, he will hardly die for them, especially if there be not what seems to him compensating advantage. Yet, dying for one's subjective convictions without regard to their absolute truth is not Martyrdom; except, perhaps, in a very low, imperfect sense. The truth for which a true Martyr sheds his blood, should be some external, objective fact that falls under the senses and quite distinct from his opinions.

Moreover, it is not even this true Martyrdom that constitutes the argument for the truth of Christianity: it is Martyrdom under circumstances which raise it immeasurably above any mere individual sacrifice, and invest it with a supernatural character, and place upon it the seal of heaven in testimony to Divine truth.

Martyrdom is but confirmatory in its character: hence the truth which it but corroborates should be already demonstrated. It is never the first and primary attestation which is vouchsafed; it is rather an effect of the proofs already given in witness of the truth. The teaching proclaimed by St. John the Baptist had been none the less the truth, if he had not lost his head in penalty of his preaching what displeased his murderers. The Gospel announced by the Apostles had been none the less the

truth, and sufficiently demonstrated, if they had not been called upon to seal it with their blood and life.

It is not the self-immolation of one or a few that supplies this argument with its force and authority, it is the number or multitude that shed their blood. Enthusiasm or fanaticism may seize and impel a few to sacrifice themselves to some delusion. But it can never seize and hurry to a cruel death, amidst appalling sufferings, uncounted multitudes. Nor can father and mother and children become similar victims of some fell delusion for generations: never can hundreds of thousands, not to speak of millions, for three centuries, and at intervals, or rather continually, for nineteen hundred years in all parts of the world, fall victims to fanaticism.

The nature of the sufferings endured is of much account in deciding the value of martyrdom as an argument of truth. If they be light, easily borne, palliated with relief, or deadened with antidotes, short-lived or brief in duration, or followed by compensating bodily or mental gratification, it is obvious that such martyrdom can be no sign or argument of truth.

If there be no option or choice between suffering or not suffering, between death or life, there can be no true Martyrdom. He who suffers or dies because he must suffer and die, to whom alternative is not granted, without regard to his readiness to uphold or deny the truth, is in no sense a martyr.

The presence or absence of tokens of Divine power and co-operation is very pertinent to martyrdom, considered as a proof of the truth. The torments and deaths of the early Christian martyrs

were frequently accompanied by the most manifest interpositions of God's providence and power: wild beasts lost their fury; fire lost its painful and consuming force; angels ministered to their consolation; springs sprang up to slake their thirst; light drove away darkness; torture lost its edge; tyrants' hearts were softened; executioners, stayed or overcome by grace and the marvellous fortitude and enduring patience and joy of the suffering, renounced their heathen profession, embraced that of Christ, and leaped into the fires and sought the torments which they had been inflicting upon their victims. They craved the privilege of enduring their sufferings and sharing their glorious death in the hope of their eternal reward and glory.

Yet, even this hope was not of itself sufficient to stimulate and sustain the martyrs in the torments and death which they underwent. It required power from on high—strength, grace and endurance from the Holy Spirit. Human nature is not of itself capable of the self-sacrifice which they were called upon to make, or deny Christ and His Gospel; no human strength could possibly bear up against all that they suffered. No human motive could have sufficed. And even if it could, no human motive could they have had. Every worldly consideration was against such self-immolation. Not fame, not riches, not glory, not power, were to be gained, but rather cast aside, by their contempt of life and sufferings when Christ's honor required it.

Nay, more: the assurance of eternal felicity would have been powerless to animate to their untold agony and direful deaths, without the supporting

grace of Almighty God. How many there are who look forward to the blessed hope of immortality; and yet, if called to the martyr's stake, how few there are who would not recoil at the prospect, unless aided and sustained and carried through by the almighty grace of God?

"The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church," said one who lived in those early days and who saw what he wrote. It was the example of those Christian heroes, it was their invincible heroism, intrepid fortitude, sublime patience, unquenchable charity for God and one another, and other heavenly virtues, that opened the pagan mind and soul to the claims of the Gospel, to the influence of grace and the light of the Holy Spirit. Thus the truth was vindicated, spread everywhere, and overcame the world, justifying its conquests by the changed minds and purified morals and exalted souls of men, and by its condemnation of all things evil and of every kind and manner of sin.

Now apply this argument drawn from Martyrdom to the propagation of Christianity.

There can be no possible doubt that the martyrs were persuaded of the truth of Christianity. For no man will sacrifice all the goods of life and life itself for a cause of whose truth he is not intimately persuaded. No man suffers simply for sake of suffering; if he suffers there must be a compensating motive. Here, then, are uncounted hundreds of thousands, even millions, of men so ineradicably convinced of the truth of Christianity that they hesitate not to seal their belief in their blood, and to give up all that the world holds dearest, and to

embrace all that the world most abhors. What an irresistible argument this is! If they were persuaded of it, we can be satisfied with their persuasion; we can make no mistake in accepting what they died for.

The witness who is known to be truthful and to have due knowledge of what he states is believed by all reasonable men when he declares on his oath that his testimony is true; when there is nothing to the contrary, such testimony is to be unhesitatingly accepted. Is not this the testimony of the martyrs when they declare in their blood that Christianity is true? Were not the martyrs truthful, and if not, what motives had they to belie the truth? Did they not have, or believe themselves to have, knowledge of that for which they died—or if they did not, how could they have so far deluded themselves as to die for what they knew not and yet believed themselves to know? Was not the evidence that was sufficient for them sufficient for all men? The rest of men simply ignored the Gospel or gave it no examination: the martyrs died for it, having satisfied themselves of its truth by examination, or evidence satisfactory to themselves. On which side does the truth the more likely stand: with those who were so persuaded of it that they died for it, or with those who, if they gave it any attention at all, simply contemned it?

As to the martyrs who were eye-witnesses of the miracles of Christ or of those performed by His Apostles and those who succeeded them, who declared that they had seen these miracles and who sealed this declaration in their blood, there can be

no doubt that their testimony is to be implicitly trusted.

As to the martyrs who did not witness the miracles of Christ nor of the Apostles nor of those who came after them, but who were so thoroughly convinced of the truth of these miracles from the testimony of those who had seen them or who had learned of them from others, that they hesitated not to die in attestation of their belief;—these, too, must have been convinced of the truth of that for which they died.

The martyrs who sealed their faith in Christ with the shedding of their blood were the foretaste and type of all the Church's subsequent victories in her persecutions from the world.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHIT- SUNTIDE.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

“And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother.”—Luke xii; 15.

IN these words we have the verification of the truth declared in the Creed: “I believe in the Resurrection of the flesh, or, as it is commonly rendered, of the body.” The Apostles in the Creed did not say the Resurrection of the soul: for that only can be said to rise again which was once dissolved: and the soul knows no dissolution or corruption. Besides, it was their intention to condemn the heretics of the time who taught that there was no Resurrection of the body, and that when the Scriptures speak of a Resurrection, they are to be understood as speaking of the rising of the soul from sin to the life of grace.

Nor was it necessary for the Apostles in this place to speak of a truth so profusely and explicitly proclaimed elsewhere frequently in the teachings of Christ—of a truth which is necessarily implied in the Resurrection of the flesh. For, if the body rises again, it is because of the soul, which never dies, and to which it is to be eternally united. If

God performs the less thing—raising the body—He assuredly performs the greater thing—rendering the soul immortal, that the two may be one. How could, and to what purpose would the body be resuscitated unless the soul still continued to exist? Bringing the body back to life means bringing it back to its soul, and necessitates that soul to be living, whence the Resurrection of the flesh or body means the restoration of the whole being.

The Resurrection of the body means the very body that each one has in this life—not a new one nor a body indiscriminately taken. This the very purpose of the Resurrection implies: for it is the body we have in this life that deserves the glory or the shame which is to be assigned at the last day. “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and on the last day I shall rise out of the earth: and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this, my hope, is laid up in my bosom,” exclaims holy Job (xix; 25-27). This body, shorn of every defect, and embellished with all that ever belonged to it, it is that shall rise to be reunited to the soul.

Nature is replete with similitudes of this Resurrection which intimate and bespeak it: man, the noblest work of God, for whose sake all things have been made, cannot be reserved to a worse fate than the material objects around him; his destiny should be even nobler. The sun dies daily to rise again; vegetable nature decays and dies in winter, to reappear the ensuing spring; trees and flowers decay and wither, but ensure their restoration and un-

failing perpetuation by the seed which they cast upon the genial earth, and the unfailing, life-giving sap which never is exhausted. But all these and all other possible illustrations are summed up in the words of the Apostle: who to him asking, "how the dead rise again," answers: "Fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die first; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body which shall be, but the bare grain, for instance, of wheat, or of any of the rest. But God gives it a body, as He wills: and to every seed its proper body. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption" (I Cor. xv; 36-42).

Christ's Resurrection is the cause of our Resurrection. He has assumed our nature, no less man than God. He is our brother in the flesh: His destiny is our destiny: He is the first fruits of them that sleep: He wills that where He is there we also shall be; He has gone to prepare a place for us. That He and others through His power rose from the dead, indicates that, as it is appointed to all men once to die, so, likewise, is it appointed that all shall rise again. He died for our sins, He rose for our justification; and we shall rise with Him.

Christ by His sufferings and death, purchased for us all the grace by which we are restored to all that we lost in Adam: in Adam we lost immortal life and immortality of body; when he sinned the soul lost eternal happiness, and the body was consigned to death: therefore, in Christ we are restored to supernatural life, and our bodies are rescued from death to share with the soul the happiness for which soul and body were at first created.

Death, the destroyer of the body, was the wages and penalty of sin; Christ by His passion and death has destroyed sin and cast down death forever: sin destroyed, its penalty, death, is abolished. But both sin and death yet remain as to fact; therefore, He has not destroyed them in the sense that they no longer exist, but in the sense that He has made them of no avail, has nullified them and robbed them of their terrors: sin no longer exists for him who wants to avoid it, for grace is given for its pardon and future avoidance: death is nullified, for it issues in the Resurrection of the body.

Christ's Resurrection is, also, the model of our Resurrection; if, however, our moral resurrection from sin to grace and newness of life precedes.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

“ And Jesus answering, spake to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? ”

WE should worship God not only interiorly by faith and hope and charity, but also externally by worship and thanksgiving. The adoration that we render our Lord and Creator in spirit and truth, should be made manifest by bodily posture and external demeanor, by all the senses through which we express the convictions and sentiments of the soul.

This duty, to be rendered at all times, is particularly enjoined on the Sundays and festivals set apart for the purpose. These days are to be made holy by abstaining from servile work, and by the doing of works of worship and religion, and by hearing God's word that they may learn God's law and will and be moved to its faithful observance.

In the Old Law the Sabbath or last day of the week was observed as the day of rest and worship. The Apostles in honor of Christ's Resurrection changed it to Sunday, or the Lord's day. The duty enjoined in this law is proclaimed by the law of

nature: the time of its observance is merely disciplinary. It is most natural that time be given to the public worship of God, to religious contemplation, and to our eternal interests; hence among all peoples certain times and days were consecrated to these purposes.

Sabbath means to cease from work, and rest; and to devote it to religious exercises and duties. From these ends we should not allow our Sundays to be wasted or perverted by the evil example, however prevalent, of others; or by worldly diversions or profane amusements or theatrical shows, even under the guise of needed recreation.

Had God commanded us to devote our entire life, day by day, to render to Him religious worship, it would be our duty as creatures, in recognition of His supreme authority and power as our Creator, and in thanksgiving for the countless and inestimable benefits which He has bestowed upon us. How just, then, and reasonable that we should set apart the Sundays and festivals for this sacred duty? And with what zeal and heartiness should it not be done. It were no less unreasonable than criminal to forget this dictate of natural religion, or to discharge it with remissness.

That nothing may hinder the due observance of the duty, we should be careful that no part of the work which should be done during the other days of the week be deferred till Sunday; which, if then done, must desecrate the day. "In six days we should do all our works; but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

If, admonished by the Apostle, we are not to

waste our lives in sloth, but, according to his words, "do our own business, and work with our own hands,"—if we are to "do earnestly whatever we put our hand to, because the night cometh when no man worketh," still less are we to squander the Sunday in listlessness and idleness and vain diversions and useless reading, upon the pretence of necessary repose. While rest is an object of the Sundays and festivals, it is an holy rest; their being kept holy is the primary object; and desired rest can in no wise be better secured than in those exercises of religion and reflection in which their sanctification mainly consists.

All servile works are forbidden on the Lord's day, because by preoccupying the mind and consuming the time they are a hindrance to the worship of God to which the day is mainly consecrated. Whatever withdraws the mind from the contemplation of divine things, is to be shunned, though not evil or sinful in itself. However, when servile work is necessary, when the service of God, or the relief of our neighbor, or other just cause requires it, such works are not only lawful but praiseworthy. "The priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame. Which of you if your ox or ass fall into a trench, will not rescue him on the Sabbath? The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath; therefore it is lawful to do a good work on the Sabbath," said our Lord. It is necessary to guard against any pharisaical rigor or hypocritical cant in the Christian observance of the Lord's day.

Most studiously to be avoided is sin or any occa-

sion or inducement to sin. For, far from leading the soul to God in devout and prayerful recollection, it withdraws the soul from Him and alienates it from His love.

Among the chief means of sanctifying this day are hearing Mass with attention and true devotion; frequently and fervently receiving the Holy Communion; approaching the tribunal of Penance; hearing the Word of God with the reverence to which it is entitled, and the docility that will make it fruitful in the soul; devout prayer and religious meditation on the eternal truths, receiving plain and practical instruction in the faith that people may know, and make it known to their children and others; giving alms; visiting the sick and unfortunate; imparting consolation to the afflicted; in a word, practicing all the duties of true Christian piety. These are the admirable means at our disposal for making holy the Sunday, and employing it for God's honor and our own eternal salvation. This is religion clean and undefiled.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE OBSERVANCE OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

“Jesus said to him: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” St. Matt. xxii; 37-39.

THESE words are the whole sum and substance of the law of God. The ten commandments are but a development of them: the first three concern our duties to God; the rest concern our duties to our neighbor. Of the two tablets given to Moses, one had inscribed on it our obligations to God, the other our obligations to our fellow man. These were “the whole law and the prophets.”

The love which we owe God mainly consists in the faithful observance of His commandments, according to the words of Christ: “He that loveth Me keepeth My commandments.” One may be moved to observe these commandments by motives inferior in nature to those which underlie lofty love. And for this reason every one should seek to perfect in its motive the love he has for God, advancing from considerations which spring rather from fear of His justice, to those which result from considera-

tion of His infinite goodness. Every one should labor to convert his attrition for sin into contrition.

Three days were spent by the Jews in preparation for its reception when the Law was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. During this time they purified their bodies, washed their clothing, and gave themselves to prayer. This should indicate to us the spirit in which God's holy law is to be received in our minds and hearts, and the eager solicitude with which we should watch over ourselves lest, when received, we should transgress it.

That God is the Author of the commandments is sufficient motive why we should sedulously observe them. As our Creator, He has the inde-feasible right to exact this homage and obedience: as creatures, we have the indeclinable duty to render it with all fullness and heartiness. He prefaces His law with the announcement of His authority to issue it: "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me."

Yet, if God had never announced the law to Moses, it were obligatory on every man; for it is written in his heart by the very finger of God Himself. The law given in thunder on Sinai to Moses, the legate of the Most High, is but the written expression of the natural law. And this natural law is the eternal fitness and order which the Divine intelligence saw existed, and should be observed in the world and among men such as God has created them. This law is a participation of the eternal law whose source and norm is the Divine intelligence guiding the Divine will. It was obscured and debauched by human passion and the corrupt doctrines of men,

as it is to-day outside of its divine custodian and teacher. Its promulgation to the Jews has illuminated the human mind and instructed the human conscience forevermore. We owe God boundless gratitude that He has thus unmistakably revealed to us His eternal will expressed in these commandments, as we owe them unswerving and unflinching obedience.

No one can complain that the Law of God is difficult to fulfill: "for His yoke is sweet and His burden light." Nothing should be easier. What easier than to love God, the beneficent Creator of all things, and most loving Father of all men? What easier than for man to love his own flesh in the person of his neighbor, and this, too, for God's own sake? And this is the whole Law.

But, if the lusts of the flesh, or the perverseness of the will, or the fascinations of the world, create repugnance to these duties, our Heavenly Father "pours into our hearts by the Holy Ghost" the fervor of His love, "and this good Spirit He gives to those that ask Him" (Luke ii; 13). God, then, is ever ready to strengthen our weakness; the evil one has been vanquished; there is no reason to be disheartened or to despair in the conflict of virtue; for, "if God is with us," who can be against us? and to him that loves, nothing can be difficult.

The Law of God proclaims more eloquently His glory and majesty than even the heavenly orbs whose beauty and motions have, even among the most barbarous nations, evoked wonder and awe and praise of the power and wisdom and majesty and glory of the Creator.

It were idle to remark (for the word commandment implies it) that the keeping of God's law is necessary to eternal salvation, if it were not that there are those who have the rashness and hardihood to deny it. To what purpose has the Law been given if it is not to be observed? and what law can exist without a sanction? and what sanction can be commensurate with the gravity of such a law and worthy of God, except that which Holy Scripture so clearly discloses? "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (I Cor. vii; 19). "A new creature in Christ, alone avails," says the same Apostle (Gal. vi; 15); evidently meaning him who keeps the Commandments of God. "If any one love Me," says Christ, "he will keep My word." And who will affirm that to love God is not required to salvation? If eternal life were not linked to the observance of the Law, very few, it is to be feared, would observe it. No one who has come to the years of discretion can be justified, unless truly disposed to keep the whole Law.

While we should observe God's holy law for His sake, showing ourselves not less obedient to His sovereign will than irrational or inanimate nature, that does it by the necessity of its being, yet, we are not forbidden, but rather invited to bear in mind that "in keeping God's commandments there is a great reward"; not merely temporal rewards, "blessed in the city, and blessed in the field," but "a very great reward in heaven, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over" (St. Luke vi; 38).

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHIT- SUNTIDE.

CONTRITION.

“And behold they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. And Jesus seeing their faith, said to the paralytic: Be of good heart, child: thy sins are forgiven thee.”—St. Matt. ix. 2.

ALTHOUGH it is not mentioned, we may rest assured that it was no less, but even more, the sorrow of the paralytic for his sins than the faith of those who carried him to our Lord, that moved Him to declare his sins forgiven.

The Council of Trent has defined Contrition to be “A sorrow and detestation of past sin, with a purpose of sinning no more.” And it adds: “If this contrition be joined with a confidence in the mercy of God, and an earnest desire of performing whatever is necessary to the proper reception of the Sacrament, it thus, at length, prepares us for the remission of sin.”

It is not enough for Contrition to cease from sin: it requires a hatred of sin and a will to atone for it. It is not enough for Contrition to hate the past and to seek to atone for it: it is necessary that there be a firm resolution to sin no more. “I have labored in my groaning,” says the royal penitent David; “every night I will wash my bed with my tears.”

"I will recount to thee all my years, in the bitterness of my soul," says the prophet Isaias. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart," exclaims Ezechiel (xviii; 21-22). "Go thy way and sin no more," said our Lord to her taken in adultery. "Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more," He said to the lame man whom He cured at the pool of Bethesda.

Contrition is an act of the will: it does not consist in sensible feeling. Sorrow is not penance, but an accompaniment of penance. Yet Contrition is called sorrow because it produces sorrow in the sensible or inferior part of the soul. Holy Scripture also uses the word sorrow to express hatred and detestation of sin: "How long," says David, "shall I take counsels in my soul, sorrow in my heart all the day?" To express this sorrow penitents formerly changed their clothing, and covered themselves in sackcloth and ashes and tore their garments. That this was not necessarily a sign of true Contrition, we are taught by the words of Divine admonition: "Rend your hearts and not your garments." For it is as true as formerly: "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." Too often sorrow for sin is merely on the lips: too often with the profession of repentance, the heart is untouched with compunction, and enslaved to vice and evil doing.

To express the "rending of the heart," which true repentance calls for, and the intense hatred of sin, the word Contrition is admirably suited. For it means the grinding, as of corn or wheat, between

two millstones, by which it is reduced to softness or powder. Similarly, the heart hardened by sin, or swollen by pride, is crushed with the blows or pierced with the anguish of Contrition. No other sorrow, or affliction, however heartfelt, or painful, or calamitous, is designated by this word Contrition: it is used only to express the greatest of all sorrows, the most direful of all pains: the grief of soul at the loss of God's grace and its own innocence. Other sorrows may be more keenly felt, but this is because they affect our sensible nature; yet, Contrition, being the act of the will which governs and controls all the powers of the soul, is immeasurably more excellent in its nature and principle.

The motive or foundation of Contrition is the consideration of the infinite goodness of God to which sin is sovereignly opposed: for it is hate and contempt of Him Whom we should supremely love. The measure and principle of Contrition and the love we owe God are one and the same: we are to "love God with our whole heart"; "we are to be converted to Him with our whole heart." Hence contrition and love are virtually the same, and spring from the same motive: the infinite goodness which we should always love and never offend. As charity is the perfect love of God, Contrition should be the same, and spring, as it does, from the same motive. God is to be loved above all things because of His goodness and perfection; sin is to be hated above all things because of the same goodness and perfection.

Sorrow for sin may be caused by considerations inferior in nature to that which underlies Contrition.

For the sinner may be moved to salutary repentance by the moral baseness of sin, by the loss of heaven, by the fear of hell, or by the ingratitude of the sinner to God, his Creator and Redeemer. Such sorrow is termed attrition, and with the Sacrament of Penance suffices for pardon. Yet every one with this sorrow should study to perfect it, until its animating principle be the love of God.

Whether sorrow for sin comes from the love of God, or His fear, it must extend to all mortal sins; in the bitterness of his soul the sinner must detest them all. "If the wicked do penance for all his sins, he shall live," says Ezechiel. Contrition that would exclude even one mortal sin to which the soul would cling, could not be true nor obtain pardon of any." "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all," says St. James.

Whether Contrition or Attrition, it must spring from a supernatural motive; no consideration merely natural suffices to obtain pardon for sin. Hence loss of health, or property, or any other such motive, is not at all adequate for the lofty purpose of reconciling the sinner with his God. It must be a motive of religion and faith, and the result of grace.

Whether Contrition or Attrition, it must be supreme, or greater than any other sorrow that we can conceive. "As the measure of loving God is to love Him without measure," so the measure of hating sin should be to hate it without measure. As God is of all goods the supreme Good, and, therefore, to be supremely loved; so sin is of all evils

the supreme evil and, therefore, to be supremely hated and execrated. This sovereign character of our sorrow will show itself chiefly in an intense and abiding conviction of the soul that sin is beyond conception the greatest of all evils, and in the wish from the innermost recesses of the soul that it had never offended, and in the unshaken resolve to lose all things, to sacrifice even life itself, rather than again offend Him. This supreme quality of Contrition is, like Contrition itself, an act of the will moved and guided by the understanding.

This characteristic of true sorrow does not, however, mean that it must excite our feelings or sensibilities, or that it must be accompanied with tears. For, while true sorrow for sin may be felt or become sensible or cause tears, yet this is no necessary sign of its genuineness. As we are constituted, things spiritual do not touch the heart so sensibly as those that fall under the senses. Hence the death of relatives and other misfortunes frequently cause sorrow which seems more intense, because more sensible, than that which is essential to Contrition. Yet, the spiritual sorrow for sin, being the act of the will which rules the soul, is incomparably superior. Sensible sorrow passes with the tears it excites: Contrition abides forever and produces an altered life.

Finally, true sorrow must be fruitful: fruitful in that it undoes the past as far as in us lies; repairing the wrongs it has done, and making restitution of what it has come by unjustly; and in other ways which we have not leisure now to enumerate. It must be fruitful, or "bring forth fruits worthy of

repentance." This will be seen, speaking generally, in a reformed life; speaking specifically, in many ways, but above all by shunning all occasions that have led, or that may lead again, to sin.

Next to the grace of never sinning is the grace of Contrition by which we are restored to God and regain what we lost. Alms, fasting, prayer, and other good works may be rejected by God: but a soul filled with Contrition, a contrite and humble heart He can never despise. As soon as we have conceived this sorrow, our sins are forgiven: "I said, I will confess my injustice to the Lord, and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin."—Ps. xxi; 5.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE UNITY OF MATRIMONY.

“The kingdom of Heaven is like to a king who made a marriage feast for his son.”—St. Matt. xxii; 2.

ALTHOUGH these words introduce a parable for a different purpose, we may employ them for a text on the Unity of Marriage. God established natural Marriage in the beginning. “For He created them man and woman; and commanded them to increase and multiply and fill the earth.” “He cast a deep sleep upon Adam; and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam; and Adam said: this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of a man: wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh.”—Gen. i-ii.

God not only thus in the beginning instituted marriage, but He, also, as the Council of Trent declares, rendered its bonds indissoluble and perpetual. This, too, Christ Himself declared in the words, “What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” (St. Matt. xix). Even if indissolubility

were not absolutely necessary for the end and duties of marriage, it is most consonant thereto and extremely useful. Otherwise the education and bringing up of children, and the fidelity to one another of husband and wife, which their intimate relations imply, would be frustrated. As a natural contract, we must hold it as necessarily one in its bond by the ordinance of God the Creator.

Yet indissolubility and perpetuity belongs to marriage chiefly because of the Sacramental character which Christ, in restoring it to its pristine character, has conferred upon it. And from this it is also that, in all that belongs to it from the law of nature, it derives its highest perfection. A bond that could be broken would be contumelious and degrading to the Sacrament, no less than fatal to true conjugal love and opposed to the Christian training of offspring and many other advantages and excellencies of Matrimony. As a Sacrament, the nature of Matrimony is much more exalted than the natural contract, and is to be referred altogether to a loftier end. For, as the natural alliance of Matrimony was instituted from the beginning to propagate the human race, so, subsequently, the dignity of a Sacrament was added to it that a people might be procreated and educated for the religion and worship of the true God and our Saviour, Christ.

When Christ our Lord would give a sign of that closest of relations which is between Him and His Church, and of His immense love towards us, He declares the loftiness of this so great mystery by the holy union of man and wife. And this He did most fitly that we may understand that of all human

relations there is none among men more indissoluble than the bond of marriage and that man and woman are bound together in the greatest love and good will; and for this reason it is that Holy Scripture frequently puts before our eyes by the similitude of Marriage the Divine alliance of Christ and His Church. As says the Apostle of this Sacrament: "for I speak of Christ and His Church."

This Sacramental marriage, then, expresses the union of Christ and His Church: as this union is an inseparable one, as Christ can never be divorced from His Spouse, nor the Church sundered from Him, so neither can the Marriage bond be dissolved forever. "The Lord hath commanded that the wife depart not from her husband, and if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and that the husband dismiss not his wife" (Ephes. v; 25).

The Church, confirmed by Apostolic authority, has always maintained and for certain taught that Matrimony is a Sacrament. Thus the Apostle writes to the Ephesians (v; 28-32): "So also the men ought to love their wives, as their own bodies. He who loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hateth his own flesh, but he nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great Sacrament, but I say in Christ, and in the Church." For when he says, "This is a great Sacrament," it doubtless is to be referred to Matrimony: because the con-

jugal union of the man and woman, of which God is the Author, is a Sacrament, that is, a sacred sign of the most holy bond by which Christ is united to His Church.

Such holy alliance can exist but between two, exclusive objects of each other's love; from the moment this state is entered to the hour of death of either, the love of each can have no other object but that to which it has plighted its faith. From this unity Marriage becomes indissoluble, except by death.

This is the bulwark of the peace and safety and existence of the family: let it be thrown down, and polygamy and polygandry and the worse immorality ensues, profaning what Christ made holy, confounding parentage, destroying all idea of family and its duties, and producing the worse evils in society. The nature of the passion from which divorce for the most arises, indicates the moral havoc and ruin that results.

That polygamy, or many wives, is at variance with the nature of marriage, Christ plainly teaches in these words: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two but one flesh" (Matt. xix; 5). If it were lawful for a husband to have more than one wife, he could not be said to be any more guilty of adultery if he took another, besides the one at home, than, dismissing the first, he was joined to another. Yet this is what is forbidden by Christ in these words: "Whoever shall put away his wife, and marries another, committeth adultery upon her; and

if the wife puts away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery" (St. Matt. xix; 5-6).

By no divorce can the bond of Marriage be dissolved. For if, after a divorce, the wife were freed from the law of her husband, she could, without any guilt of adultery, wed another man. But this the Lord plainly denounces: "Every one that puts away his wife, and marries another, committeth adultery." Therefore it is manifest that the bond of Marriage can be broken only by death. Hence the Apostle: "A woman is bound to the law, for as long a time as her husband lives; but if her husband die, she is freed from that law; she may marry whom she will, only in the Lord" (I Cor. vii; 39).

Nor should the indissolubility of Marriage seem burdensome because, as the word imports, it can never for any reason whatever be sundered. We should keep well in mind that it is not merely personal gratification or desires, but mainly the general good of society, that this Sacrament provides for. And as any general law may work hardship for the individual while it secures the public welfare: to this last the first must yield. Everyone is bound to make sacrifices of self for the common welfare. Besides, for entering this holy state, virtue and likeness or congeniality of disposition should be considered and held paramount to wealth or beauty or any other adventitious circumstances of nature or fortune.

Moreover, if Marriage could be dissolved, the parties would never want causes of strife and

alienation which the old enemy of peace and charity would plentifully sow, and abundantly supply at all times when passion or caprice or inconstancy would suggest or invite divorce. When, however, it is understood that if even separated from mutual board and the habit of wedlock, they are yet bound by the bond of Marriage, and all hope of union with another is thus precluded, they are wont to become slower to anger and strife. And if sometimes divorce is sought and obtained, when they find they can no longer or with difficulty bear the absence of a partner, by the good offices of friends, they are easily reconciled to their conjugal life.

When divorce is permitted, family ties are loosened or dissolved. With separation in reserve, how easily does conjugal love grow cold; what carelessness in alienating and transferring the affections. How frivolous the pretexts for which divorce is sought; how easily is it granted; maybe even for the asking; frequently sought for causes which call forth the indignation of a righteous public opinion, and the protest of all in whom every spark of Christian faith, or of even natural morality, is not wholly extinguished.

Society has not yet advanced so far as to claim a right to many wives at the same time; it is as yet satisfied to get rid of one by some shift or strategy before taking another. Yet, if divorce be allowed at all, it will easily come to pass, that, going from worse to worse, men will come to not putting away and taking another, but, Mormon-like, to have two or more at the same time. Already, even among those professing friendship for Christian civiliza-

tion, have been heard demands for this indulgence to their human weakness; or, better, wickedness.

Fearfully prevalent as is divorce, it is by no means as prevalent as that practical divorce or polygamy which used to be designated adultery; a word growing obsolete as the crime grows apace. It is condemned while it is practiced: its censure is on the tongue merely. The Mormon professes to believe that his practice is allowable: those unfaithful to their marriage vows belie their profession, and condemn openly what in secret they pursue.

It is obvious how disorganized the family must be when divorce is allowed, and how corrupt society must be when adultery is commonly practiced. What disrupts the family must disrupt society: society, made up of demoralized and disintegrated families, must be itself demoralized and disintegrated.

Marriage as instituted by Christ and taught by His Church is the only effectual means to preserve society from these mighty evils, to meet and grapple with and destroy these degrading and destroying tendencies. If the sacredness of Marriage were upheld, divorce would be impossible: no longer would husband be separated from wife nor wife deserted by husband: nor children made orphans by the sin of their parents. Soon Christian homes would be what Christ would have them, and Christian society would again become what it was when Christ's Sacrament was held inviolate.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

GOD OUR REFUGE IN TRIAL.

“And there was a certain ruler, whose son was sick at Capharnaum. When he heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and prayed Him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.”—St. John v; 46-47.

WHAT is temptation? and what is it to be led into temptation? To tempt is to make trial of one who is tempted that by eliciting from him what we desire, we draw out the truth. Which mode of tempting does not belong to God. For what is there that God does not know, to Whose eyes all things are naked and open? There is another kind of tempting, when advancing further, something is wont to be sought for a good or evil purpose; for a good purpose, when the virtue of anyone is tried in this way, in order that being seen and recognized, he may be magnified with emolument and honor, and his example may be proposed to others for imitation, and all by the spectacle may be incited to the praises of God. Which manner of tempting alone assorts with God. “The Lord thy God tempts thee,” says Deuteronomy, “that it may be made

open, whether you love Him or not." This kind of trial is recorded frequently in Scripture, as the test God was pleased to make of Abraham's obedience in requiring him to sacrifice his son: his prompt readiness was rewarded by the Lord's countermanding His own command. His singular patience and submission was to be for the everlasting remembrance of men. "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee," was said to Tobias.

Men are tried with a bad purpose, when they are impelled to sin or ruin; which is the peculiar office of the devil. For he tries men with the intention of deceiving them and driving them headlong. This the tempter does in various ways, employing inward and outward temptations, and even making use of evil persons as his emissaries and agents. "For the devil as a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he may devour." "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" supply abundant fuel for the perpetual onslaught which the tempter carries on against the souls of men. To this is to be added the poison of false doctrine ever proceeding from those sitting in the chairs of pestilential error.

Countless are the modes in which we may be led into temptation; but these we need not here pursue. Even the benefits lavished upon us by God may become to us a source of temptation; but this will always be through our own perversity leading us to abuse them to our ruin by a blind gratification of our propensities. And if holy Scripture speaks of God tempting men, and "giving them up to disgraceful passions, and to a reprobate sense," and of

“blinding the heart of this people,”—this is not at all to be undertood as done by God, but simply as permitted by Him; “for God tempts no man.” God is the Author of sin to no one; rather, he hates all those who work iniquity.

As the life of man is a temptation on earth, it is not for us to ask that we should not be at all tempted. For trial is useful and fruitful to mankind; because by it we come to know ourselves, that is, our strength and weakness; wherefore we are humbled under the mighty hand of God, and, manfully warring, we look for the incorruptible crown of glory. “For he that engages in the conflict is not crowned unless he lawfully contend.” And, “Blessed is the man who suffers temptation; because, when he shall have been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those that love Him.” For, if sometimes we are hard pressed by the assaults of the enemy, the thought will be a great relief to us, that we have as an helper, “a pontiff who can compassionate with our infirmities, being himself tempted in all things.” We should pray, lest, bereft of the Divine succor or deceived by temptations, we yield, or, cast down, surrender, that God’s grace may be always present with us; which, when our own strength fails, may renew and refresh us on the evil day.

Wherefore, we should generally implore the help of God in all temptations; and, particularly, when we are afflicted by any special ones, we should fly to prayer; which we read was done by David in almost every kind of temptation. We pray, therefore, that we should not give a loose to our cupidi-

ties, nor weary in enduring temptations, nor stray from the way of the Lord, that both in adversity and prosperity we preserve evenness and steadiness of mind, and that God may leave no part of us void of His watchful help. We pray, finally, that He may tread Satan under our feet.

Nor should it escape us what in prayer we ought particularly to think and meditate upon. In this it will be most excellent, if, understanding how great human weakness is, we distrust our own strength; and, placing all hope of our security in the Divine goodness and relying upon this defence, we have and show undaunted courage even in the greatest perils; especially calling to mind how many endowed with this hope and courage God has snatched from the devouring jaws of Satan. Thus Joseph was rescued from the burning lust of that wicked woman and raised to renown. Thus Susanna, beset by the ministers of Satan and on the point of being slain by a wicked sentence, was preserved safe; "for her heart trusted in God." Thus Job, who triumphed over the world, the flesh, and Satan, winning immortal praise and glory.

Let faithful souls bear in mind, also, Whom they have for their leader and guide in the temptations of their enemies, Christ the Lord, Who by this conflict obtained the victory. He overcame the devil. He is the stronger who, coming upon the strong man armed, overcame him, whom he strips of his arms and spoils. Of this victory which He gained over the world it is that St. John says: "Have confidence, for I have overcome the world." And in the Apocalypse He is said to be the conquering lion,

and that He went forth conquering and to conquer, because in His victory He gave power also to His worshippers, to conquer.

If we could but see with our eyes the victories which men of faith, hope and charity win daily in these conflicts with the devil, we should judge nothing more frequent, nothing more glorious. "I write to you, youths, because ye are valiant, and the word of God dwells in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one," says St. John.

Now, Satan is overcome not by idleness, or sleep, or wine, or revelling, or lust; but by prayer, labor, watching, abstinence, continence, charity. "Watch and pray," says Christ, "that ye enter not into temptation." They who use these arms for this fight, turn their adversaries to flight; "for they that resist the devil, he will fly from them." Yet, in these victories of holy men let no one please himself, nor carry himself more proudly, as if by his own strength he could trust to bear the temptations and onslaughts of the devil, his enemy. This is not of our nature, this is not of human weakness.

The power by which we prostrate the satellites of Satan is given by God. "Thanks be to God that gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, because the accuser of our brethren is cast down, and they bound him, by reason of the blood of the Lamb. These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them."

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

FORGIVENESS OF WRONGS.

“So also will My Heavenly Father do to you, if ye do not forgive from your hearts every one his brother.”—St. Matt. xviii; 35.

THESE words of our Lord conclude the parable of the unjust steward, who being himself forgiven by his master the enormous debt of ten thousand talents—about ten million of dollars—refused not only to forgive, but even to wait till his debtor could pay him the trifling sum of one hundred shillings; but throttled him, and cast him into prison until he should pay the debt.

This parable teaches in the plainest and most striking manner possible the vital duty that lies upon every one of forgiving from his heart those who have any wise injured him; no matter what may be the number or aggravating circumstances of such injuries.

For the sinner who has sinned against God, even to the extent, it may be, of the ten thousand talents, and who looks to the Divine mercy for pardon, there would seem no need of inculcating so obvious a duty. Nevertheless, it frequently happens that these very persons who themselves are the greatest

debtors to Divine justice and to their neighbors, are the most obstinate and even stubborn in refusing to forgive others, they themselves at the same time presuming to ask pardon for their sins—entirely unmindful that “with what measure they measure, the same shall be measured out to them”; that the condition of God’s pardon is that “they forgive every one his brother from his heart.”

In the Lord’s Prayer we ask God to forgive us our sins as we forgive others their offences against us. By these words we, as it were, extend to God as an inducement to our own forgiveness our ready forgiveness of others; in this we should be careful that we speak what is true. To forgive others their trespasses against us is necessary that we may obtain the forgiveness of our sins against Almighty God, as our Lord unmistakably declares: “For, if ye forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your trespasses; but if ye forgive not men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins.”

What right have we to expect pardon from God for our sins, if we refuse pardon to others? Are we of more consequence than God? Have we not offended Him far more grievously than others could possibly offend us? What comparison could there be between the guilt of sin against God, and the guilt of offence against us? What duty has our fellow man toward us, that we have not a thousand-fold toward God? Yet, we have contemned this duty, and still ask and expect pardon: why should we not readily and even gladly forgive those who have forgotten their duty to us? What silly pretexts do

we assign for not forgiving our enemies: what solid reason could not God give for refusing us pardon for sins enormous in malice, uncounted in number, and red with the blood of Christ, violated again and again.

If, then, we are to be forgiven, we must forgive: this is the law of God's bounty in this matter. He requires mutual love between men; He rejects the sacrifices and gifts of those who are not reconciled. For, it is the law of nature and of the Gospel that we do and be unto others what we would others do and be unto us. It were the rankest arrogance that seeks to escape God's vengeance and punishment for one's own sins, while cherishing vengeance and refusing pardon and inflicting chastisement for his neighbor's against himself. Consistency in this matter is something that pleases God.

There is nothing in Scripture that God urges more often and more strongly than readiness on our part to pardon injuries done us. "If thy brother have trespassed against thee, reprove him: and if he be penitent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day return to thee, saying: I repent: forgive him" (Luke xvii; 3-4). "When thou offerest thy gift at the altar, if thou hast aught against thy neighbor, go, first, and be reconciled to him and then coming offer thy gift." "When thou comest to pray, if thou hast anything against another, forgive it, that your Father Who is in Heaven may also forgive you your offences" (Mark xi; 25).

Yet, such is the perverseness of fallen nature that there is nothing so much against our grain as this

inevitable duty: reluctance to it is in proportion to its inexorable obligation. Like every other virtue, it can be acquired only by frequent habit, and by prayerfully dwelling upon the passages already quoted and elsewhere to be found in which it is imperatively taught by our Lord.

The consideration that we are all sharers of the same nature, brothers and sisters of the same great family, descendants of a common stock, children of the same eternal Father, prone to the same miseries, subject to the same weaknesses and trials, destined to a common end, having the same enemies to hinder our reaching it—all these should be potent motives to disarm vengeance, to dissuade rancor, to cherish mildness, to impel forgiveness and charity. Can we call ourselves children of God, Who makes His sun shine, and His rain fall upon all, good and bad alike, while we refuse to forgive wrong, and to love the wrongdoer from our heart?

Moreover, when we discharge this duty, and forgive men their offences against us, we make ourselves, in a manner, like unto God, by imitating the infinite goodness which impelled Him to save mankind from death and destruction at no less sacrifice than the blood of His only begotten Son for the forgiveness of sin; we make ourselves truly the children of such a Father; the resemblance betrays the parent.

Christ, Who knew the weakness of our nature and who compassionated with our infirmities, put no duty upon us that we are not able to bear and discharge. Yet, He requires for our enemies not only forgiveness from the heart, but even commands us

to pray for them. "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father Who is in heaven." Thereby implying that we are not the offspring of His Father's grace unless we hearken to Him, speaking in our hearts this spirit of forbearance and patient pardon. The deepest shame and most withering confusion should blush the face and fill the heart of him who would refuse to obey this mandate of Christ, his Lord and Redeemer. Direful ruin must fall upon the unforgiven soul of him who himself neglects to forgive. Nor can he blame but his own injustice if he dies with all his sins upon him; for by his own action the grace of God was withheld.

However, in this matter, difficult enough to human nature, we are not to fall into an error, making the duty still more burdensome, thereby possibly leading to despondency or despair. There are those who know this duty, and are conscientiously anxious to fulfill it, and when they have done both in desire and act all that is in their power, to forget injuries and to forgive, and love those who have wronged them, they cannot banish the remembrance nor stultify their conscienceness of the wrongs endured; some secret grudge, some resentment or animosity more bitter and deep-seated than they imagined arises in their minds, disturbs their conscience and fills them with alarm lest they should not have done their whole duty to God's law and their neighbor.

But here as in other temptations; it is the flesh against the spirit. Nature is prone to revenge; the spirit moved by grace is ready to pardon: this is what holds in all temptations, and constitutes our

continual trial and struggles. However, we are not to think that this strife and contention of nature and grace, of the flesh and the spirit, interferes with or lessens the full discharge of this duty; nor does it lessen but rather augments our merit; nor can it, any more than any other temptation unyielded to, endanger our salvation, so long as we cleave not to it, but persevere in the heavenly duty and fixed resolve of pardoning injuries and those who inflict them, and loving our neighbor as ourself because he is God's creature, and the redeemed of Jesus Christ, as we are.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

ON LYING.

“Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest Thou for any one: for Thou dost not regard the person of men.”—St. Matt. xxii; 16.

THUS the Jews sought to trap our Lord by uttering that which in itself was true indeed, but in their mouths the lie of flattery. But He knew their purpose and gave them the answer for which they could never delate Him to authority: “Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”

There is no vice more universal than that of lying, either by word or action. And its universality is increased by its apparent levity and harmlessness. Yet there is no vice a more fruitful source of mischievous and ruinous consequences. “The tongue is indeed but a little member, and yet it boasts great things. Behold a little fire, how great a forest it kindles!” A malicious tongue may cause and often does cause the loss of property, good reputation, life itself, and even the loss of salvation, to those involved. And this may happen, particularly, to the wronger or the wronged. Because the one, deterred by shame or what he calls his credit or some other

motive, cannot bring himself to satisfy the wounded sensibilities of the offended or repair the evil effects of the lie; thereby sinning against justice and charity. Or, because the other, stung by the insult or exasperated by the injury it has done him, may, to wreak vengeance, resort to what is grievously sinful, and fatal alike to life and soul of himself and assailant.

Not alone upon those immediately concerned, but upon others, and even upon the community at large, the evil of lying spreads: for good faith, trust and truth,—the essential bonds or links that hold men together and without which society cannot subsist and must fall into chaos and confusion of life, so that men seem to become evil spirits and the world a pandemonium,—are dissolved and destroyed by this vice of duplicity and lying, whose father was the devil.

A lie is a sin against the Holy Ghost; for its aim is to make things otherwise than Divine truth knows them to be; it is running in the face of that which is, as it actually exists and is known of God; it seeks to subvert the eternal order and harmony established by Him.

We are not to lie for friend or against enemy, nor for or against ourselves; for a lie is a sin against justice, which gives to everyone that which belongs to him. We are not to lie even to do good or for a good end; for the end cannot make holy the means; no accruing good can alter that which is, intrinsically and before God, wrong. A lie is not to be spoken even in praise of virtue or for the credit of truth or religion; for virtue or truth or religion do not need

such weak support, nor do they borrow arms from iniquity, nor are they defended by evil.

He who lies to serve a friend, either to secure him an advantage or rescue him from misfortune or merited punishment, encourages him to ways of corruption and the employment of lying testimony to secure his ends and desires. And by thus lying for one, another is injured, and forces those constituted in authority, led by false testimony, to determine against that which is right. They who thus lie are accountable for the damage thence resulting. It must be a grievous humiliation to the liar, as the lie itself should be a source of remorse, to be conscious that his baseness and perfidy are known to him who has profited by them. Yet, painful as is this consciousness, it does not repress his lying propensity, nor dispose him to listen to the reproaches of conscience; for, emboldened by temporal gain and temporary success, his heart is closed to regard for truth and justice, practiced in untruthfulness, and hardened to impiety and impudence. "Thou shalt destroy all those that speak lies" (Ps. v; 7).

Lies may assume forms that give them a malice in addition to that which belongs to them as such. Lies of slander, by which one is charged with that of which he is innocent, thereby destroying his reputation. This is a most grievous sin as inflicting a grievous wrong. For such iniquity there is no pardon till full reparation is made of the honor of the injured and of the evil that it has entailed upon him.

Those who listen to the slanderer, without reproof, particularly if they encourage him, become

sharers of his guilt. For there would be no slanderers if there were no listeners. Nothing so unnerves the calumniator and discourages his malicious tongue as the impatience and chagrin, if not open disapproval, of those standing by. Hence their duty.

There are lies that sow troubles and breed feuds between friends. There is no measuring the extent of the evil to which they may give rise. Yet the liar is responsible for it all; for he cannot but foresee what is the fruit to be expected from planting the seed of hate and discord.

There are lies of flattery which by smooth and deceitful praise cajole and hoodwink those whose favor they would curry, or whose money or honor they would wheedle, or whose virtue they would lay snares for, calling the "evil good, and the good evil."

There are lies that praise or extenuate the sins of those whom they palter and play the sycophant to for some mercenary gain or sordid advantage. In this way they may cause the sinner to stick fast in the mire of iniquity; he by their deceitful tongues being deprived of motive of rising therefrom, being made so easy and satisfied with himself.

There are those who with lying flattery seek to bring calamity on or compass the ruin of those whom for some reason they hold in aversion. Thus the Jews in our text would entrap Christ into some word against the rulers of the time.

There are those who would fain believe that so long as they utter no lying word they are guiltless of mendacity. But lying, being essentially deceit,

any form of dissembling, be it in word or without word, in deed or in action, and even without purpose of injury, is a lie and wears the guilt of sin. Actions no less than words express what is in the mind.

Probably the worst form of lying, certainly that which can work the greatest ruin, nay, infinite and eternal misery to those upon whom it is practiced, is that which, arising it may be from mistaken kindness and anxious care for the bodily and mental ease of the dying, would persuade them that there is no danger of death when death is at hand, and would cheer and solace with hope of returning health and prolonged life those already sick unto death, and may be paralyzed with its mortal grasp. By this kind of lying, the sinner's reconciliation is deferred, no offices of religion called for, no religious dispositions cherished in the soul of the sick person, and in this condition is summoned incontinent and without the Sacraments before his God. This kind of lying should invoke the eternal fate upon the liar which the lie entailed upon its victim, by a just retribution. For the malice of a lie is proportionate to the evil which it works or is capable of working.

The turpitude and malice of a lie should be seen from its author: it is of the progeny of the devil, "a homicide and a liar from the beginning," in the words of Christ. For, as the devil "abode not in the truth, he is a liar and the father of lies," says St. John (viii; 44).

Time will not permit us to even enumerate, much less dwell upon, all the evil consequences which follow upon lying, as a litter or brood its breeder; we can only mention a few of their sources or heads.

God hates the liar, and ranks him with the proud and the shedders of innocent blood, and fornicators. "There are six things which the Lord hates, and the seventh His soul abhors: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart devising evil thoughts, feet that are swift to run to mischief, him that tells lies, and a deceitful witness" (Prov. vi; 16). He who thus incurs so notably God's wrath, cannot escape the most grievous punishment.

What baseness and foulness for the tongue that blesses God and praises Him, to be employed in slandering men made unto the image and likeness of God! The tongue which in one moment gives glory to God, in the next by lying, renders dishonor and contumely to the Author of truth. Wherefore, liars are excluded from the bliss of Heaven: when David asked, "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle?" the Holy Spirit answered, He that speaks the truth from his heart, and has used no deceit in his tongue."

Finally, lying as a spiritual disease is well nigh incurable. For, as its guilt in its more serious forms, such as calumny, cannot be forgiven until the liar satisfies the injured, and repairs the injury, and as this involves an humiliation very repugnant to false shame and empty and affected dignity, there seems no doubt that he who indulges and perseveres in this vice is destined to everlasting perdition.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE LAST THINGS,—THE FIRST.

“ Lord, my daughter hath just now died; but come, lay Thy hand on her, and she will live.”—St. Matt. ix; 18.

DEATH, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, are called the last things, not assuredly because they are last in interest or importance, but because they are last in point of occurrence: the final issues upon which is staked, or which constitute our eternal doom. Yet, the insensibility of men to their true interests and their darkness of mind have made these truths, thus fraught with eternal significance and eternally necessary, to be the last and the least in men's minds, and to have little or no weight in their lives and actions. “ With desolation is the whole land made desolate because there is no one that thinketh in his heart; ” —in his heart, remark the word, for there are not wanting many who thinketh with their tongue, that is, who talk wisely as if they thought deeply; but they feel not, or act not on what they profess. Their talk is sham, because it goes not further; action is what really talks in everything, and alone tells upon salvation.

The salutary truths—Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell—thus last in time and in the lives of men,

should be the first in their minds and the most influential upon their will.

What it most behooves men to shun in this world is sin as the insurmountable obstacle to salvation. If we but remember these truths, we shall always avoid it. "In all things remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin," are the warning words of God speaking through His prophet. Deep and sustained reflection upon these truths must needs produce in our souls a plentiful harvest of innocence, and detachment from this world.

Nothing so subdues unruly passion, quenches the fires of lust, disarms headlong proclivity to sin, as the remembrance of death—the fate of all men; ever drawing nearer and nearer, and, it may be, at our very doors. How the terror of approaching death unnerves the bravest heart and makes it feel what in its pride and strength it never felt—the insecurity of life and the nearness of death! With the gaunt visage before us and his scythe raised to mow us down, about to be gathered into the garner-house of death, where all the children of men are buried and to be buried, in what light appears all that we long for here below and in which we would fain find our happiness.

Youth is no security against death; manhood is its harvest time; old age, its continual invitation and inducement. What we need is a realizing sense of the certainty of death, the uncertainty of its approach, the need—the supreme need—of being always ready to meet it. And this we can only have by continual reflection on this truth, and an abiding sense of its nearness, at our very door. With equal

pace and startling noise death knocks at the cottage gate or palace door. How wisely shall we not think and act if we not only remember, but feel, “that we are but dust and into dust we shall return.”

Who is the man so sunk in vice, so enslaved to passion, so obstinately blind to his eternal salvation, as not to allow his heart to return to itself, if he seriously and for any length ponder, that it is appointed for him not only one day to die, but after death be judged; that the day will come—and that the day of his death—when he shall have to render to an all-just and all-searching Judge a rigid account of all his words and actions and most hidden thoughts and of every idle word; and this to be followed by a sentence that shall never be reversed?

The shame of men is often a most telling restraint upon vice, passion, and dishonorable deeds. Few, if any, would commit their works of shame before others, few or many, and still less before all men. The conviction of the presence of the all-seeing Eye has proved an over-mastering restraint upon wrongdoing when all other means have failed. How great should not be the sense of shame, piercing and withering, at that judgment which shall search men’s souls in that hour, decisive of our eternal fate, when even the just shall scarcely escape, and will not be found without blemish! Evil dreads the light: how will the sinner bear the light of God’s countenance? How powerful, therefore, to dissuade from sin, to bridle passion, to intimidate the sinner, is not the remembrance of this Divine judgment; and at the same time how efficacious to encourage the just, to strengthen him in temptation, and to sustain him

in perseverance. Let this salutary thought, therefore, never be absent from our minds, especially in seasons of trial.

Heaven! Do you seek an encouragement and support in your warfare, which is man's appointed life on earth? Till the days of Job and since, and while time will be, our days must be a steady conflict. Behold the incorruptible crown which the Lord, the just Judge, has in store for those who shall have approved themselves His valiant soldiers. The acts of self-sacrifice, which we practice, the bruises of mortification which we inflict upon the flesh, the conquest of evil thoughts and impure suggestions, will irradiate with glory our bodies and souls forevermore. It is obvious that this eternal reward, well pondered, must be most efficacious in weaning the heart from sin, and giving it a bent and incentive to virtue, and an unfailing support in its pursuit.

Men seek honor, particularly from those who are discerners of merit, and authorized to reward it; how consolatory must it not be to be honored by the blessed, who will know the exalted merit of each of the elect; but, above all, what glory, and honor, and peace to be called by God Himself no longer servants but friends, brethren, and sons! —to be addressed by the Redeemer in these words of burning love and undying honor: "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you." To be thus recognized, and thus rewarded above all men, by Jesus Christ, in the presence of the Eternal Father, and the heavenly spirits, and before assembled men and the eternal glory which

is to follow—is not all this enough to stimulate to virtue, and the avoidance of sin—is not all this enough, and more than enough, to encourage us in all the trials and to compensate us for all temporal losses that may be the price of our Salvation? Surely, this is true. But the main thing is to realize it all; and we can only realize it by allowing our souls to dwell upon it by assiduous and prayerful meditation. Truly, this last thing should be the first.

Hell! Eternal Hell! inextinguishable torments! “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!” Do we look for something to keep us steady to our aim of salvation? Where shall it be found if not here in this portentous truth? If this alarming penalty is not enough to deter men from sin, and to make them dread the risking of remaining even an hour in mortal sin, God Himself can do nothing more to fill them with salutary fear, consistently with their free will. To be confined in that foul and dismal prison, in chains and unquenchable fire, with the reprobate souls of every age and nation, the vilest offscouring of humanity, and the unclean spirits, all hideous in moral deformity—to be plunged and buried forever in that bottomless pit, and revolting gulf of despondency and despair, of misery and woe, and all throughout the never-ending ages of eternity, without hope of release or relief, is assuredly enough to make men abhor all sin and everything that could have the feeblest or farthest bearing in bringing upon them such dire and rueful calamity. This banishment from the sight of God, and this pain of sense, and both for eternity—this is the manifested justice of God—this the punish-

ment prepared for the devil and his angels, and all those who by their works resemble them, and are cursed for their sins into the same everlasting punishment.

Would to God that this truth disclosed so clearly in His revelation were always present in our conscience! Would to God that, realized by faith, men would allow it to exert its all-subduing restraint upon passion and sin! This can be done only by earnest and sustained reflection upon this last of the last things to be remembered; or, more properly, the first things to be remembered. For what is not actually visible and present to our senses, can be made as if present and visible by reflection. Let, therefore, Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, always be before us; if so, they shall indeed be salutary and soul-saving.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER WHITSUNTIDE.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

“When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: let him who readeth understand.”—St. Matt. xxiv; 15.

EVERYONE undergoes two judgments: one at the hour of death, which decides his eternal fate; the other at the last day, which will reaffirm the first and assign to the body the bliss, or the woe already the portion of the soul.

Many reasons are given for this twofold judgment. Among others it may be said that the influence and consequences of a man's life and actions, for which he is responsible, do not cease with his life: they flow on from his time into the life of his children and of those who have been brought within their reach, even to generations unborn: his good and evil are not interred with his bones: they survive for his credit or discredit: his account is not closed till the last day. Wherefore, that he may get what is coming to him, be it reward or punishment, it is necessary that there be a final reckoning at the end of time.

Besides, the General Judgment will serve to show who were really the just, and who really the wicked:

for the fate of everyone at the hour of death remains unknown, except to himself. Moreover, such a final assize will unfold the wisdom of the inscrutable Providence which during life often allows the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper; a fact which were enough to stagger the faith of even holy men, if there were no assurance of a future readjustment in a Judgment that would condemn the wicked and exalt the just.

The assurance of this Judgment should do much to check the wicked, to encourage the virtuous, and to compel men to hold judgment on the mysteries of life in suspense, awaiting the disclosures of that day of manifestation.

It is Jesus Christ Who will on that day judge all men: He Who died for the world will judge the world. "But I say to you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of Heaven," said He to His judge. "This Jesus Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as ye have seen Him go into Heaven," said the angel at His Ascension. Not only as God but as man He will judge the world: "As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him power to judge as He is the Son of man," is the testimony of Jesus Himself.

Certain unmistakable signs will forerun this second coming of the Son of man on this mission of justice, so unlike His first entrance into the world. Holy Scripture gives them. "The Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the whole

world for a testimony to all the Gentiles," and then shall come the end. Whether this means a simultaneous preaching of the Gospel throughout the world, or a successive one in different parts at different times, we know not. Most probably the last; as nations that have received the Gospel and afterwards rejected it have not been vouchsafed it a second time.

This view is also implied in the second of the signs of the approach of the General Judgment. For we are told that there shall be a great falling from the faith: "Think you that when the Son of man shall come, He shall find faith upon the earth?" Nor are we to believe that the day of the Lord is at hand, nor be seduced by lying impostors as to His coming, unless we see these signs verified. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for unless the apostasy first take place, and the man of sin, the son of perdition, be revealed, who opposeth, and who is lifted up above all that is called God, or is worshipped, so as to sit in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God" (II Thess. ii; 3-4).

We know that His coming will be sudden and unlooked for. As the coming of the thief in the night, such will be the coming of the Son of man. "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone. And as in the days of Noe so also will the coming of the Son of man be. . . . And they knew not till the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of man be. . . . Therefore be ye also ready, because at what hour ye know not the Son of man will come."

There will be no mistaking its approach. "For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and appeareth even unto the west, so will also the coming of the Son of man be."

The fall of Jerusalem in its circumstances was a type of the fall of the world and of the Judgment of men at the last day. Christ, in describing this catastrophe, portrayed in the same words His coming at the end of time; so similar are the events that the one description serves both, or both descriptions fade into one.

"And immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from heaven; and the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then will all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty. And He will send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them" (St. Matt. xxiv; 29-31). Read the seventh chapter of the prophet Daniel and you will find a heart-stirring description of the Son of man sitting in judgment upon the children of men, and assigning to every man according to his works.

It will need no lengthy process to reveal the secrets of hearts in that day of terror: for to God's omniscience nothing is hidden, and by his power the sins of all men will be laid bare and manifested to the assembled world. In an instant the uncounted

multitude will file off into two great divisions, the just standing to His right, the wicked to His left.

Then beholding the elect, with unmixed satisfaction and supremest love, He will address them: "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." No words could be sweeter or fuller of consolation. No more ample compensation could be given to the just for their lives of faith and hope and charity—loyalty to God and the service of their neighbor, and self-conquest. They pass from labor to rest, from tears to joy, from misery to everlasting bliss. How much earned at so little outlay!

With a countenance that portends the sentence He is about to utter, He will turn to the reprobate: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Cast out from Him, if they could carry with them the light of His countenance, or a ray of hope, or a small blessing from Him, they might have some little comfort. But those words, "Ye cursed," deprives them of all this, and marks them as under an eternal curse, and increases their woeful misery and direful calamity. They can expect no alleviation from Divine justice, which pursues them with damnation into the everlasting torments "prepared for the devil and his angels." Unutterable must be the misery of such companions: the refuse and off-scouring of humanity is bad enough; but the devil and his angels! fallen and accursed spirits!

Nothing should be more forceful to bridle evil passions, and to restrain even the most headlong proneness to sin, and to hold men steady to virtue

and far removed from sin's occasions than this truth of a future Judgment before Jesus Christ and an assembled world—to be followed by sentence of such eternal import.

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